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SERMONS

ON

PASSAGES FROM THE PROPHETS.

VOL. II.

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SERMONS

ON

PASSAGES FROM THE PROPHETS.

VOLUME II.

WITH APPENDIX,

CONTAINING NOTES OF UNPUBLISHED SERMONS.

BY THE

REV. J. M. NEALE, D.D.,

FOUNDER AND FIRST CHAPLAIN OF S. MARGARET'S, EAST GRINSTED.

LONDON:
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SERMON XXXI.

ABIDE WITH US.

"O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet Thou, O LORD, *art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not."*—JER. xiv. 8, 9.

[1862.]

I OFTEN feel, my Sisters, how we, more than any other Sisterhood, have to be on our guard against the temptations and difficulties which arise from the very nature of our work; giving you, at home, when your numbers become few, so much more to do, and so, almost of necessity, lessening your own time for prayer, and for preparation for confession. That was what put this text into my mind. When you have each of you had the work that illness at home* and abroad has lately given you, that dear LORD Whom we are endeavouring to serve will be (unless we are carefully on the watch) as a

* An outbreak of scarlet fever among the Sisters.

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stranger in the land. And for that, as well as for other reasons, ought we to be thankful that —notwithstanding the pestilence that walketh in darkness—your lives, as the wise woman of Tekoah so beautifully says, have been bound up in the bundle of life with the LORD our GOD. We did not, as we too sadly remember, come unharmed out of our first attack of illness; and in all human probability, this would have been the worst.

"Why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land?" Now, leaving this matter, take the words in another sense. The first and plainest answer to the question would be that saying of Isaiah's: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD." And this you, best of all persons, ought to know: how one little allowed sin does separate from all feeling of GOD's love, all happiness in His Sacraments, all joy in your Sister's life. And you all know, too, how hard it is not to have some little pet sin that you allow to remain in your hearts, as the Israelites left some cities of the accursed nations untaken. "The Canaanites *would* dwell in that land," as it says. There is nothing, I think, more singular, either in self-examination, or in hearing a confession, than to see how a very little fox, a very poor miserable little fox, goes

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and, not destroys, but *spoils* all the tender grapes of that season; not ramping about like Samson's foxes, that had firebrands tied to their tails, and burnt down all the corn fields; but skulking hither and thither, doing a little bit of mischief on this side, and another little bit on that.

But however, that is not the proper meaning of the text. It is not, Why shouldest Thou be a stranger? for then the answer would be plain; but, "Why shouldest Thou be *as* a stranger?" And I think that half the pages of mystical and ascetic devotion are taken up by endeavouring to reply: why it is, that—without, so far as we can see, any especial reason—why, without any particular sin—nay, why, when perhaps we have been trying hardest, all at once there should come over us such dryness and listlessness and coldness—why prayer should all at once become an intolerable burden: and even the Blessed Sacrament itself be no joy or comfort at all. Well: it is no new suffering, no unknown complaint. Old it is as that first Easter sunset, when "He made as though He would have gone further." And what followed? "They *constrained* Him." And from that time to this, the same sorrow that it is so; the same apparent will of GOD that it shall be so. Read the writings, especially the letters, of all the great masters of

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the Spiritual Life: S. Francis de Sales or the Mère Angélique in France, S. Theresa or Luiz de Granada in Spain, Tauler or Thomas à Kempis in Germany: and do they not over and over and over again, by every possible allegory, by every beautiful symbol, teach that GOD may be closest when you think Him furthest? how, as the German proverb says, "When thou fearest, GOD is nearest?" Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre weeping for her LORD, and He standing behind her; the disciples in the room with the closed doors, and the LORD invisibly among them; S. Luke and S. Cleopas with their—"We trusted that it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel," and He Himself in Whom they trusted, the companion of their journey. They remind you how the night is darkest just before daybreak: how the air is coldest just before sunrise: how the winter is sharpest just before you see the first snowdrop. Therefore, they say, take courage. To live in the perpetual sense of that presence which is better than the life itself, is for that world, not for this. The loving father may come to visit his poor child at school, and bring him some of the delicacies of home; but he quickly departs. Does the child think him gone for ever? nay, does he take his father's absence as a sign of his dis-

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pleasure? nay, does he not rather take it as a sign of his love? Does he sit with folded hands, and think, "Now that I have him not with me, I cannot do what he would have me do; my lessons are mere burdens; my schoolfellows intolerable?" Then why, O poor trembling one, shouldest thou so distress thyself? why shouldest thou be so cast down, be so apt almost to despair, because at all times thou hast not the sensible presence of thy LORD? Thou shalt have it again, never fear: thou shalt have it, perchance, all the sooner if thou bear His absence patiently, knowing that it is no sign of want of love, but only a trial of thine own love and faith. Thou shalt have Him again, even in this world: and then, in His own good time, the holidays shall at last come; the true Easter Holidays of the Eternal Easter: and thou shalt go to see Him,—no longer in a glass darkly, by only feeling His Presence—no longer by fits and starts, now finding Him, now losing Him—no longer even under the form of Bread and Wine: but face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend—but constantly, without cloud or passing shadow to shut thee out from the Eternal Sun—but Himself, not the Victim on the Altar, but the King on His Throne.

So, or in such manner, they speak: so, or in

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such manner, were mediæval Sisters comforted. The Japanese have a belief that birds of paradise are the souls of dead doves; and that when one such approaches a living dove, although she cannot see it, she is thrown into a thrill and quiver of ecstacy and delight. Something like that takes place when one of the Bridegroom's doves is visited by Him Who had once, and has still, a body in all points like her own. You all know how, if those times of listlessness and barrenness are so hard to bear, that yet there is another side to the question: that there are also seasons when, you cannot tell why, your dear LORD seems dearer to you than commonly: when the Blessed Sacrament is a greater delight; when prayer is easier and more comforting. They do not come often, but they do come sometimes: and generally, I think, when there is least apparent reason for their coming. So too those mystical writers say: that it is not usually at the great festivals, or the deepest fasts, but on some unnoted and common day, that the LORD thus visits His own. Whenever it is, make the most of the happiness while it lasts. The King is then saying, "What is thy petition, Queen Esther, and it shall be granted thee? and what is thy request, and it shall be performed, even unto the half of the kingdom?" And no better

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prayer for you than hers: "If it please Thee, O King, let my life"—my true better life—that life of which S. Paul writes as led by the faith of the SON of GOD—"let my life be given me at my petition, and my people" (and what are your people here but those who are joined to you in the same Sisterhood?) "and my people at my request."

Now this text in itself only mentions the danger to which that which you hear every day of your lives is the antidote. Ah, my Sisters! I am afraid that, with all our reading the Bible, we fall sadly short of the knowledge which they had of it, who lived when Bibles were so scarce! I should not at all wonder if there are some among you who do not at once catch the contrast that I mean. Hear the verses then, consecutively:

"O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?

"Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not."

And now see how beautifully the chapter* is chosen for the time of day. "Why shouldest Thou be as a wayfaring man that turneth aside

* The Scripture nightly read at Compline, Jer. xiv. 9: "Thou, O LORD, . . . not."

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to tarry for a night?" The day is come to an end. "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." "Abide with us." "Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not."

But the time will come, of no tarrying and no night,—not of the three Tabernacles, but of the abiding Mansion.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXII.

YOUR OWN LAND.

"*They shall dwell in their own land.*"—Jer. xxiii. 8.

[Before Advent, 1856.]

That is the promise with which the Church winds up her own year. Therefore the Nativity; therefore the Fasting and Temptation; therefore the Agony; therefore the Crucifixion; therefore the glorious Resurrection and Ascension; therefore the coming of the Holy Ghost; all to this end: that we might dwell in our own land. It is the highest of all promises; it is the most blessed of all blessings; and therefore well and wisely it stands as the crown and key-stone of the whole.

"I will gather them out of the north country, and from all countries whither I have driven them." And see how that gathering is going on now. See by how many paths God leads His own elect to their future home: see in how many schools He teaches them that one great

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lesson of His service: see in how many afflictions He purifies them: see how He so ordains the sundry and manifold changes of the world, that those He would gather are thus by them all brought nearer to Him and to Home.

And this your earthly home, my dear Sisters, ought to be a type to you of that House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, whither the Forerunner has for you entered, whither He invites you to follow Him. This your gathering here, from so many different occupations and duties, with such different characters, with—so far as this world goes—such different likes and dislikes; and yet, I well trust, with only one hope, one aim, one faith, and one LORD, ought to be a type to you of that glorious gathering now and every moment going on among all nations and kindreds and people and tongues; the results of which shall never be known till they are seen in that vast multitude which no man can number, who will stand before the Throne and before the Lamb.

And see how He gathers them. Think how differently He has gathered each of you. Think what different motives, yet all inspired by Him—think what different feelings, but all tending to His service—have made you wish to dedicate yourselves to Him; how He has smoothed

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down difficulties, removed obstacles, made the crooked straight, and the rough places plain;—how gently He has led you on, how safely (it is Isaiah's word, you know, as well as Jeremiah's,) He has *gathered* you! And all to this end: that you may dwell in your own land.

Oh! what a dear word that *own* is! But then of all things this is first to be remembered: you must in a certain sense dwell in your own land while yet here, if you are to dwell in it really and for ever there.

My dearest Sisters, surely this is more true of you than of others. Everything here must remind you that this world never is, and never can be, *your* own land. You have determined to give it up; you have professed to desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; and the one question for you is—how much of your thoughts and affections is daily and hourly there?

He Whom you love at a distance, yet your own still—the land of your hopes very far off, but your own yet:—and the question for this week is, How much more your own than at the concluding week of the last year? Yes: and how much more you His own Whom you serve? I know very well that you can no more expect to see your own progress from day to day, than you can trace that of the tide from moment to

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moment. But a year is a long time. I think that any Christian whatever, I am sure that any Sister of Mercy whatever, if she is acting up to her profession, must in that time be conscious of it. Now think for yourselves, whether it is so; or rather, how much it is so. Think whether there is any sin which was a besetting sin at the beginning of last Advent, but which has now been so far overcome as to be no longer so. Think, if there was any one particular Christian grace which you then saw you must and ought to practise, in which you now are confident that you have made progress. Think whether your self-examination is more earnest, whether you are more particular in detecting little sins. Think whether there is nothing that you took to be a lawful indulgence then, or at least that you gave way to without any effort then, which you now feel to be a sin. Think whether there was any especial exercise of self-denial which you then found it almost impossible to take in hand, but which you now can much oftener and much more easily perform. And above all, though it may be more difficult than any other thing to find out, see how much more the one great source of everything you do is love to our dear LORD: how far more it is the natural thought and impulse of your hearts,—His love and His

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glory. All these things together will shew you how much nearer you are to your land.

"That they may dwell in their own land." And surely GOD sends us all our difficulties and hindrances, all our trials and doubts, all the changes and chances of this mortal life, to this very end, and that our desires for it may become the stronger. We have all a lesson in our dear Sister's illness, to work the work of Him that sent us while it is day, because the night cometh when no man can work. He would lead you all by it, as He would lead her, to labour the more earnestly to enter into that rest—that glorious rest that remaineth—that "own land" to which we have already the right of citizens.

"That they may dwell in their own land." And with these words the Church turns us over, as it were, to the season of Advent, and of His coming Who is to put us in possession of it. For my part, I can only say what I have said before, that my earnest hope and prayer for you all is, that it may indeed be sanctified in you and by you. I trust that there will be a marked progress in all of you; that in those things of which I have spoken to each of you—and you each recall them to memory—you will have made real progress: that you will all be more watchful over your thoughts and words: all longer and more

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rigid in your self-examinations and more frequent in your Confessions; more earnest and humble and resolute in receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

So you will be helped on to your own land. "For" (and what a depth of meaning there is in those words of Moses when we apply them to the Heavenly Canaan!) "the LORD thy GOD bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." There indeed will be the end of all the Church's years—the end of all those feasts that come and pass away; all will, as it were, be summed up in that; all the yearnings and longings after that country will be changed into its fruition.

Yes; the wilderness will not last for ever. Its drought, its loneliness, its fiery flying serpents, all are well, if they put us on our way to the Country. Yet a little while, and "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Yet a little while, and you shall dwell in your own land.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXIII.

TO APPROACH UNTO ME.

"*And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto Me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? saith the* LORD."—Jer. xxx. 21.

[ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. 1856.]

WE could scarcely find one text that has greater comfort. It is the exact verse, of all verses, for a Sisterhood: it tells them what they have to do, and how they can do it; it shews them their work and their strength: the rough road and the bright ending. See now if I am wrong.

"Their nobles shall be of themselves." And what does this mean, but that the Saints, whose memories we hold so dear, were, after all, of ourselves, men of like passions with ourselves, men of like infirmities with ourselves; men that had no different helps or graces from those which we all may have? *Nobles* indeed they now are, for they dwell in the Court of the King of Heaven, beholding the

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riches of His glorious Kingdom, and the honour of His excellent Majesty many days, even an eternity of them. But they had the same hard struggles within themselves that you now have; they often fell as you now fall; they were sorely discouraged, as you are now oftentimes discouraged; but still they said with a good heart, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall also rise." And rise they did, as high as to the Throne of GOD and the Lamb. And you, my dear Sisters, would more naturally turn your thoughts to those your companions in this life of yours here, and to be, as I trust, your blessed companions in the life to come. Your nobles shall be of yourselves. What greater love to their and your dear LORD had they than you, if you so willed, might have? What more perfect purity; what more earnest self-denial; what higher holiness? Why should not one Catherine, or Isabella, or Lydia, do that which we know another Catherine, and Isabella, and Lydia, to have done for CHRIST'S sake? *Cannot!* Never let me hear that word. It is a word not fit to come into the mouth of any Sister of Mercy.

Cannot either means nothing: or it means *will not try;* and GOD forbid that I should hear it in that sense from any of your lips. I wish

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you would think, each for herself, how many *cannots* you have seen fade away since you were more earnest in your resolution to serve GOD. *I* could count no small number, I think, from each of you. That verse,—I should not mind if you had it on your lips every hour,—I should thank GOD if you had it in your hearts every second—"I can do all things through CHRIST Which strengtheneth me." I remember once in Portugal, travelling over a wide plain, with acres on acres of the sweet cistus stretching in every direction to the horizon. But, behold, about the heat of the day, we saw, a quarter of a mile before us, a great broad majestic river rolling across our path, clearly without a ford, and having no bridge. There was a *cannot* indeed. We appealed to our guide what was to be done—how we should pass? "Wait," he said, "and you will see." And as we drew nearer, we found it was only the mirage of a fog. The imaginary river resolved itself into mist: and we passed what had seemed to be its bed, smiling at our own anxiety. Ah, my dearest Sisters! if I could but remove from you those mirages of *cannots* which so often beset you now, as our guide, and time together, removed that from us then! And yet I scarcely know a better way of doing so than by making

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you look to those who, after being compassed about with the same weaknesses with yourselves, have so gloriously sat down at that Marriage Supper of the Lamb, at which also you all hope to enter. It is well said, then, "Their nobles shall be of themselves."

But the next promise is still more glorious: "Their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them." Who is the Governor, save He of Whom it is written, "The government shall be upon His shoulder?" And here we are reminded that He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; that He was tempted as we are, suffered as we do: expects us to tread in His steps, promises us to share in His reign. He did indeed proceed out of the midst of us; and because He did, we may well use S. Paul's "therefore," and say, "Let us *therefore* come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

It follows: "And I will cause Him to draw near, and He shall approach unto Me." And He did draw near to His FATHER and our FATHER, to His GOD and our GOD, even while He was on earth. He drew near on those cold, barren mountains, where He continued all night in prayer. He drew near when He said, "FATHER, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard

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Me; and I knew that Thou hearest Me always." He drew near when, just before His Passion, He lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, "FATHER, glorify Thy SON, that Thy SON also may glorify Thee." But the latter part of the clause, "He shall approach unto Me," was not fulfilled till the time of glory, that first Ascension Day, when the multitude of the heavenly hosts went forth to meet Him with their song of triumph, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD;" when the multitude of those heavenly Spirits that went before and that followed, cried out, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." When, having finished His sorrowful pilgrimage on earth, He returned to His Home and ours; when, having borne the nails and the spear, He returned to shew their scars, as glorious trophies, to the FATHER; to make them the guiding stars of our hope, the anchoring places of our faith, the source and the fortresses of our love. "He shall approach unto Me." Yes: and if He had not, where should we be now? What would be our hope? where would be our trust, unless He, being made a High Priest of good things to come, had entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into

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Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us?

And yet notice: this that is said of the Head may be said in a certain sense of the members. "I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto Me." Cause him: and how? And that brings us back to the old story; that shews us the same beaten way: but it is the King's Highway, and if it is beaten, it is because more souls have attained to glory by its means. "I will cause him to draw near." Several of you in this week, will draw near by that blessed Sacrament of which you know the pain, and, I trust also, know the blessing; all of you will draw near, unspeakably near, to-morrow, when in this place, and from my hands, you receive the Body and Blood of your glorified LORD. But then the latter part of the promise, "He shall approach unto Me:" will that also be fulfilled? Oh my dear Sisters, if I could think that any one of you, now struggling with whatever weakness, whatever fear, whatever infirmity, but still, as I trust, on the LORD's side,—if I could think that any of you should, little by little (it could scarcely be by one great slip) fall away, first, from your first love, then from all love at all, and so finally be found on the left hand, how could I bear to speak to you as I do now?

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Anything,—God grant it,—rather than that! Even falls, if falls there must be; discouragements, disappointments, weaknesses, shortcomings, irresolutions, drawings back, anything but want of success at last! All these I expect in you; and, though it is a bold word to say, me, by God's help, they shall never discourage. But not *that!* For the sake of Him Who has given you the good desire at first, Who has given you more or less help to its fulfilment, Who has promised so gloriously to reward it, not *that!* You will let me, will you not? (for remember that, after all, on you it depends,) you will let me apply that promise to all of you: "He shall approach unto Me?" And what will that approach be? What will be that exceeding glory to which you are invited? That Saint of old, who made a hymn "On the heavenly home-sickness," as it has well been called, which comes perhaps as near to Heaven as any earthly thing can do, how did he answer the question?—

"I know not, O I know not
What social joys are there,
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare.

And when I fain would sing them,
My spirit fails and faints,
And vainly would it image
The assembly of the Saints.

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O Land that knows't no sorrow!
O state that fear'st no strife!
O P-incely Bowers! O Land of Flowers!
O Realm and Home of Life!"

"He shall approach unto Me." As another Saint said, "LORD JESUS, I know not what this means; but Thou dost. Whatever it means, fulfil it in me!"

But now comes the question with which the verse ends: and at first sight it seems to come in strangely with what has gone before. "He shall approach unto Me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? saith the LORD." It would seem as if we were first called, and then checked; but it is not so. I will put the question—you know I always do—to each of yourselves. I look around on each of you, and then ask, "Who is this that engaged her heart to approach unto Me, saith the LORD?"

Think now, for a moment, each of you for herself: of your sins, and weaknesses, and failures: from the time you can first remember till now; and call to mind that, what you can recollect, that I know also.

"Who is this?" And, if our LORD were now in His Bodily Presence among us, thus He might speak,—might speak of each of you: "This is one on whom I set My love before the founda-

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tion of the world. This is one whom, from her childhood till now, I have watched over,—whose sins I have seen, whose weaknesses I have pitied, with whom I have borne long, whom I have helped in so many ways: and finally into whose mind I put—that which none else could have put—the desire of serving Me wholly; giving herself to Me entirely; becoming fully and for ever My own. Thus far My love has led her,—thus far My grace has preserved her,—thus far I have brought her on:—she knows something of the labour, she knows something of the reward. Whether she will persevere or not, that is in My own knowledge. What I say unto you, I say unto all,—*Watch!*"

It is so indeed. You each of you know your own failings: and I think you each of you know that, except by a greater power than your own, you could not have had the wish of serving GOD which you now have. The result is in your own hands. Were I—instead of being what I am—the greatest Saint in the world, I could not make you, as the text says, approach unto GOD. But being what I am, you know how anxious I am to help you, so far as I can. You know that while you tread the road you have taken, I feel it not only my duty, but my great privilege, to assist you if I can, and so

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far as I can. GOD grant you all to persevere in it to the end!

And now, before I give you the blessing, let us all spend a few minutes in prayer. Without prayer you can no more lead this life, than a living being can exist without air. And what are you to ask? Why, this. That, seeing your nobles are from among you, and that the Saints never did, and never could, do anything which you also cannot do,—seeing your Governor is from yourselves, seeing that He, Who is your LORD and your GOD, suffered as you do, to the end you might reign as He does,—that you may indeed take courage and approach to GOD—that you may persevere in what you now intend—that He may accept your intentions; that He may give you strength to fulfil them, nd that He may finally reward them.

And now let us pray for all this:—do you do it for yourselves, as I shall for all of you.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXIV.

THE TIME OF LOVE.

"*Thy time was the time of love.*"—EZEK. xvi. 8.

[1860.]

I WAS reading the other day, my Sisters, the saying of a somewhat celebrated Protestant preacher, that he preferred a text with one definite and specific meaning, where the intention of the HOLY GHOST was perfectly clear, and could not be developed. We have not so learned CHRIST. We know that it is in those promises which seem at first sight most vague, that faith finds the surest and safest hiding-place, and hope the sweetest food: just like, as I have told you before, the *At that time*, with which your lessons begin.* And so this text, whichever way you take it, seems to shed such a shower of light on a Sister's life, that I wonder I have never before spoken to you of it.

* The words preface the Gospel lesson in the third Nocturn at Matins.

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In the first original sense, it is the time in which GOD, seeing you as yet in sin and impurity, passed by and spread His skirt over His poor Ruth. Baptism, if you will, but rather, that effectual will by which He disposed your hearts to the Religious Life. And you must remember that the great masters of Theology have always seen a marvellous analogy between that first and second call. Hence the new name which some Orders require on taking the vows: which indeed also may be understood with reference to that new name in the white stone given to those happy ones that are counted worthy of the better life. Wherein is the analogy? Not only in old things passed away, all things becoming new; not only in the step taken, the advance made, by one single action: not only in the triple vow of each, as it were in honour of the Blessed TRINITY—in the one, renunciation of the devil, belief in the true faith, obedience to GOD'S commands—in the other, poverty, chastity, and obedience—there is something further yet. For just as Baptism sweeps away all sin, actual and original, in him that receives it, so when is post-baptismal sin more likely to be blotted out than in the day which seals any one of you to be her LORD'S Bride? Those of you who are even now looking forward to give yourselves to Him, not, as

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at present, for a time only, but for time and eternity, body and soul, you would not dare to come, I know, without the truest preparation, the most earnest preparation that you could bring. Those two sets of six months each in Shushan the Palace, have they not their own mystical meaning? Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, for so they use that go in unto the King. Is not that the same thing as Isaiah's "Cease to do evil, learn to do well?" Oil of myrrh, the repentance for former sins; sweet odours, the acceptable sacrifice of good works. Well, then: never so likely to be a true and brave-hearted Confession as before Profession; and when therefore so close a resemblance to Baptism? "Thy time was the time of love." They who have gone through it know that it was so. Of love, whether as regards the Bridegroom's for the Bride, or hers for Him. Only remember, that that first fervency of love and happiness cannot always last; and then comes the danger lest that which is in itself only a mere necessity of human nature in this world, should be set down for a sin. "You tell me, my child," so wrote the Mother Agnes Arnauld to one of her Sisters, "that things are not with you now as they were; that when you first made your profession, the very sky seemed bluer

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and the trees greener,—that earth was almost turned into Heaven: now, all is changed; the glow is gone, the charm has fallen off, the constant prayers begin to feel tedious, the vigils and works of self-denial irksome; and thence you gather, that you are in the wrong way; that you are treading the broad road. Have you not heard me say a thousand times, that thus it must be? that to keep up the first ecstacy of love and fervour, is not for earth; that it is the great beatitude of Heaven itself that 'His servants *shall* serve Him'—that is, shall serve Him without ever going back or failing in their allegiance, or crying out, 'If it be so, why am I thus?' My child, *you* want to anticipate *Heaven*, and believe me, GOD wishes to be served on earth. Only keep on, without this comfort of feeling now, with comfort of feeling then,—keep on praying your best, working your best, obeying your best,—and though the old ecstacy cannot return, (at least not as an habitual feeling,) there will come a calm and a love which will bring you into the haven where you would be."

Then, dearest Sisters, "Thy time was the time of love," surely applies to your self-dedication. Then, at least, GOD gave you grace enough to say, "I will; I will let earthly expectation go; I will bury all worldly pleasures at

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the foot of the Cross." That was "a time of love" indeed—first, the power of making the resolution; then, the thankfulness that it was made.

And, oh LORD JESUS CHRIST, was not that a time of love also, when Thou didst thus stretch out Thy golden sceptre to Thy before-chosen brides? What didst Thou see in them, O LORD, to choose them out of so many others? to remove difficulties and make the crooked straight; to offer these Thy doves a safe home in the glorious cave of the smitten Rock, Thine own wounded Side, when Thy time was come at last, and Thou gavest them grace to know that time of visitation? And since then, how often, O LORD, has Thy time been the time of love! When they have denied Thee, and Thou hast turned and looked upon them; when they have been almost fainting, and Thou hast caused them to remember the Land of the Living; when they have gone astray, and Thy rod and Thy staff have brought them back again. What now to be desired but that Thy time should still be the time of love: what, but that every season of Lent Thou shouldst still, as of old, *stand* and cause them to be brought to Thee—that at every Passion-tide Thou shouldst accept their ministrations to Thee, as the offering of Veronica,

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returning them again with Thine own most precious countenance stamped thereon!

That is what you would say for yourselves, dear Sisters, and what I think you would have me say for you. But I will take these words in quite a different sense.

Two of you, at least, are about, for a time, to be, comparatively speaking, in the world, and to rest. Do not think that I would, even if I could, alter your rule in this respect. Only remember what S. Bernard says; "Never yet went Sister to her natural home, but she returned worse from it to her spiritual." At all events that shews the danger: and forewarned ought to be forearmed. What I am always so anxious for is, that you should make very few rules indeed about your life at home; and having made them, keep them *through fire and water*. These things, for example, nothing but illness ought to prevent you doing:—your first morning and last evening prayers: a certain time for prayer, including our Litany, in the forenoon of every day: the intercessory LORD'S Prayer for the Hours; and not less than twenty minutes for prayer and self-examination at night. Add to that, [a full season of] Spiritual Communion on Sundays and Festivals. That, I do say, is the least: but I also say, and not less, that I would not have you absolutely

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resolve on more. So even this may be made a time of love, may it not? For remember that never can the text be so well fulfilled—"They took knowledge of them, that they had been with JESUS"—than in such a season. "When she spent a few days with us, it seemed as if a breeze from the eternal summer had passed over us." That was said of one whom I once knew, of your sex and situation, nearly as young as the youngest of you, who now is before the throne of GOD and the Lamb!

Then another thing: "Thy time"—however hard it seem to believe so—"Thy time is the time of love," to that dear Sister who is so tried with bodily suffering. "You desired to be engaged in My service? you shall be so most effectually. You wished to practise self-denial? you shall exercise it most continually. This is the work I give you: My work; work about which there can be no mistake whether it is Mine or not: and in doing that work, you shall find My peace; My peace, that which I gave to My Apostles, I give to you: My joy shall come out of this heaviness, and the good seed shall bear precious fruit in the Day of Sheaves."

And yet again: "Thy time is the time of love," ought to apply above all things to Confession. Marvellous indeed, that the acknowledging of

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sin should be the renewing of GOD'S love; but yet what would become of us, if it were not so? I think we know it for ourselves—I hope we all do—how that any great fall, once confessed, does seem to be followed by a corresponding increase of our love to that dear LORD Who pardons still. I think that no better text could be inscribed over any confessional than this: "Thy time was the time of love." The Priest may think of it, as addressing it to his LORD, Who purchased the forgiveness of sins by the Via Dolorosa and the Cross on Calvary, or to the penitent, who thus, for love to the LORD of sinners, undergoes the misery and shame which must precede the Sacrament. And I am sure he ought to take it to himself. If he then speak one needlessly harsh word, if he then, by speech or deed, do any the least thing to make sad the heart that GOD would not make sad, oh how all the actions of the Great High Priest cry shame on him! of Him Who shewed how the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins: of Him Who pronounced, "Neither do I condemn thee:" of Him Who said, "Weep not." I know how easily the thoughts will rise in those who are tried to the utmost: "It is very easy to be told to do this or that; easy to be forbidden this or that. Oh if *he* knew!" O my Sisters! I have

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often wished that I could by experience enter into those difficulties, and self-denials. Only remember that He can; He, Whose time was the time of love when He endured them Himself, Whose time is the time of love when He lays them on you. Calvary—He toiled up it: a rugged fierce ascent you have to climb. His Cross He had to bear: the instrument, the proof, the organ, the Sacrament, as S. Augustine would say, of love; and you must bear it after Him. If He could but say, pointing to each of your situations, duties, hardships, self-denials, at this very moment, "*Her* time is the time of love!" That is: "I will give her such abundance of My grace, that every thorn of her crown shall distil it on her brow; that her external cross shall be more deeply impressed on her heart. I will call her to no work but that I will render it blessed to her; I will trust her with no work, but that I will be a blessing to it."

And what when the full time of love shall have come! All sin abolished, all doubts ended, all temptation crushed, all fears over! Yes, even hope itself and faith gone: so no more time of faith, no more time of hope; only love—love that cannot fail, love that is *from* GOD and *to* GOD, yea, that *is* GOD Himself. Only one difference. His time "*was* the time of love." But

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what of the *eternity* of love? My Sisters, can any race be too long, too hard, too self-denying? any battle too fierce? Why, think of what you have felt even here, in those special times, when the Prince has given you those sweeter manifestations of Himself! that, "Oh if they could have lasted!" And yet, what are they to the completion of the union? What is Esther in the house of the King's chamberlain, to Esther seated by the King on the throne? Rachel, betrothed in seven years' hard service, to Rachel, at length held fast in the inseparable embrace? Oh how miserably short all language falls! Oh, how only He, the GOD of Love, can make known their meaning! May He, my Sisters, He, now seen by you in His dear Sacramental Presence, make known to you what I would, and cannot,—or rather, tenfold as much! He satisfy you with that Presence here, in the time of love, till He bestow on you the true and eternal kiss, in the consummation of His marriage hereafter, which is the eternity of love!

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXV.

THE STAFF OF REED.

"*And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the* LORD, *because they have been a staff of reed to the House of Israel.*"—EZEK. xxix. 6.

[1863.]

BUT, my Sisters, what is spoken in condemnation to the Egyptians, may be said in thankfulness of the Israelites. They meant the reed which they put into the hand of GOD'S people to fail and deceive; and, lo! it became a staff to support and to comfort. They meant it to pierce the hand, as you remember Rabshakeh told the Jews that Pharaoh king of Egypt always did; the reed here spoken of being a brittle, not a pliable, water plant, and splintering up into sharp fragments.

Well: the Egyptians do so still; and I think we can all bear witness that they do so here. It is much, then, to resist a temptation; but it is a bette victory still to turn it into an assistance;

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it is something, when the serpent flies at you, like Moses, to grasp it tightly, till it shall become a rod in your hand. And the miracles that serpent-rod afterwards performed, shew what power and strength for good a conquered temptation will give.

"They shall take them captives whose captives they were." You see it over and over again, how the besetting sin has become the characteristic grace. In the histories and biographies of Convents, there is nothing more common than to find that such and such a Sister, whose natural fault was hastiness of temper, became the meekest and most patient of the whole body; how such another, naturally yielding to sloth, came to be the brightest example of diligence to the rest. One striking example exists at this time. One should have said that a course of sin more especially connected with the body, would have been the thing that, of all others, would prevent GOD'S shewing any illustrious proof of regard to that body. You all know the history of Margaret of Cortona; how she lived in sin, for seven continuous years, with a nobleman of Monte-Pulciano; how, one day, her lover left her, promising to return in a few hours; how the day and the night passed, and he came not; how

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the next afternoon his pet dog returned by himself, and drew her, by the dress, along with him; how, in a lonely ditch, she found the unhappy man covered with mortal wounds, and already beginning to turn to corruption; how, on the spot, she resolved that if ever the kingdom of Heaven were taken by penitence, it should be in her case: and to what an energy of repentance, to what a height of holiness she rose. And it is remarkable that the body thus, and for so long, yielded a servant of iniquity unto iniquity, is the only body of any Western Saint, so far as I know, which remains to this day, six hundred years after, not only uncorrupt, but with the similitude of sleep rather than of death. Surely this was the rod turning into the staff.

And I might say much more, my Sisters, of the way in which you should each try to make your besetting sin your special help; but I want now to take the text in another sense; and to speak of Him Whom we ought to love best, rather than of ourselves.

It is singular to notice, how, as the Church has come further and further from the time that her LORD was on earth, her expressions of tenderness towards the Passion have increased and been intensified. Her love could not grow

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greater, but the affectionate development of that love has done so. Only imagine: were one of the nails which pierced His most blessed Hands actually known to be in existence, how it would be enshrined as the chief treasure of Christendom! And yet when the three were in existence, and were presented to the Emperor Constantine, no man thought it irreverent that he used one of them for the bit, and the other two for the trappings of his favourite horse. And, even while the Apostles were yet on earth, the pillar to which our LORD was fastened during His scourging, was employed as a prop to a gallery in one of the churches of Jerusalem. And now, in how dear remembrance we hold all those instruments which helped to work out the plan of our redemption! How hymns have been written, and offices composed, and sermons preached in honour of the Nails, and the Crown of Thorns, and the Title of accusation, and the Spear, and the Scourge! Of one of those the text speaks: the Rod which the soldiers put into those most pure Hands, and with which they smote that most Blessed Head. That rod, made by the Egyptians, is now become the staff of every true Israelite.

Surely there is nothing more wonderful in the whole history of man's redemption, than the

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way in which the deepest humiliation of Him that was King of kings and LORD of lords is also His glorious Coronation. "Thou sayest that I am the King of the Jews." The Monarch about to be crowned, must have His attendant soldiers; wherefore "they gathered unto Him the whole band." The royal Crown must be set upon His Head: wherefore the soldiers plat a crown of thorns; the sceptre must be given into His Hand: therefore they tender to His hold the reed; the imperial vestment must be put on His shoulders,—first as King of earth, so they clothe Him in purple raiment;—then as King of Heaven, so He is arrayed in the glistering white that typifies the glory of everlasting brightness; the knee must be bent before Him: therefore they kneel and adore; He must take His seat on the Throne: wherefore at the sixth hour they crucify Him; He must exercise the greatest and highest power of a monarch, namely, mercy: therefore the words, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise;" He must have rebels: therefore the complaint of the Pharisees, "Write not, The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews;" and, finally, He must have the title of His claim written in the three great languages, that it may be manifest how

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His dominion is to be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the end of the world. Hell did it in bitter mockery; God turned it into glorious truth. Verily the Egyptians' reed is become the Israelites' staff. That, of the whole economy of the Passion.

Now, think of the Reed itself. Meet it is that it should have been given to Him; meet, that He may have wherewith to rule the nations as with a rod of iron: meet, that your Ahasuerus should not lack, as each of you draws near to Him, the golden sceptre to stretch out to His Esther. And notice this. They took it from His Hand; and to what end? To smite Him on the Head. See again how, spite of himself, Satan teaches a most blessed and strengthening truth. They did it that He might suffer the more: that the thorns might pierce His adorable Brow more deeply: but what else did they effect? This: they only set the Crown more firmly on His Head. Yes: from that time to this, when He then suffered in His own Person, when He has afterwards suffered in the persons of His servants, every such suffering has made His diadem the surer, has been another defeat to the gates of hell. Is it not so even with you? Have you not, when you have been privileged to endure hardship or weariness, or

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pain for Him, done what in you lay to confirm His Power in others,—to extend His Kingdom, to make sure His Crown? And by what means was that Kingdom extended over the earth, save by suffering? What spot over the globe, where the Royal banners have gone forward, ever saw them first erected otherwise than by resistance even to blood? Cast your eyes in thought over the globe, and what a superb line of Martyrs arises, as from Japan, with its seventy thousand that, in one persecution, died for their LORD, by China, and India, and Persia, and Arabia, and Egypt, you ascend into Asia Minor—not less triumphant against Mahometanism than against Paganism, —and North Africa, the very battlefield of the Church, and behold the countless conquerors of Italy, and Gaul, and Spain. I do not know how it may be with you,—I cannot tell whether, when in our Martyrology I read a long catalogue of undistinguished names, undistinguished, that is, as the lesser stars of Heaven are undistinguished, it is tedious and wearisome to you. To me it is a pleasure even to pronounce the name of a Martyr. Remember, then, when we next read that noble catalogue, how in each passion the soldiers, the persecuting armies of the Prince of the power of this world, once more smote the King on His Head with

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the reed: but lo! this reed turned into the staff of our strength, and that blow did but set the crown more securely on His royal brow.

And, dearest Sisters, as He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, so He wills that we should be in all points glorified like Himself, according to His Humanity. Therefore as He Himself was crowned, so He waits, He desires, He wills to crown you.

Every stroke that Satan or the world gives you here, bear it only as He bore, and it renders that crown more—I must not say certain, for who may not fall from it? but—more your own. Not that the powers of hell mean it so; of that be very sure; but that, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him;" where you must join those two last words to both clauses. If we suffer with Him, as He did, and in His strength, we shall reign with Him, where He is, and in His glory. If we suffer without Him, it will be the Apostle's sad question once more, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain?"

No: rather let us all try this Lent so to use the reed that it become the staff; so to follow our LORD through His Passion, that we may glory in His Resurrection; so to bear every

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trouble and temptation for His sake, that we may add to the glory of His Crown, and secure our own.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXVI.

SAFE FOR EVER.

"*And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey.*"—EZEK. XXXVIII. 11.

[SEPTEMBER, 1860.]

WHEN one has been accompanying a dear friend to the starting-point of a journey, one naturally follows him in fancy, when the good-bye has been spoken, through its various stages. One naturally thinks: Now he is at such and such a station; now he is getting out at such and such a place; now he is at the end of his day's travel. Well; and shall not we, who have so very lately accompanied a dear Sister to the beginning of that journey which separates things visible from things invisible, yet for a little while think of what that journey is, what its nature, what its end?

"And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land

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of unwalled villages." Here in England, where we scarcely know anything of walled towns, it is not easy to enter into the full delicious meaning of that phrase. One does not at once feel how walls involve, in time of war, the certainty of attack: how, whether garrisoned by a band of friends, or assaulted by an army of foes, the misery is well-nigh the same: how it is the village which is safe and quiet, when the city is blockaded and assaulted, and given up at once to the perpetual danger, the restraint, the watchfulness, the famine. And see how the two agree: the Prophet of the LORD, and the LORD of the Prophet. "I will go up," says the one, "to the land of unwalled villages." "In my FATHER'S House are many mansions," says the other. Both use the plural number: "villages:" "mansions;" the multitude of the redeemed: the thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. And then, the glorious liberty of that word *unwalled*. Only think how, never, for one single moment, must you be unwalled here; or one careless instant may overthrow all. Look back, my Sisters, to your own lives,—especially since you have been here,—and see how sometimes the advantage of a long steady watch has been utterly lost, because just for one moment you

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relaxed it,—just for one moment you turned your eyes away from the point of danger:—and at that moment the never-sleeping enemy found his way in. To my mind, that new sensation of safety must be the strangest—if not the happiest—of all that crowd on the newly-emancipated prisoner, the newly-crowned soldier. Think of our Sister: one hour lying in constant dread lest, at the very last, some sudden temptation, some new incursion of the enemy, some pang, harder than any yet to bear, might after all deprive her of the crown. And then, the next hour,—no possible fear of falling now—no possibility of sin now—no need of carefulness: the armour may be laid aside,—the watch may be relaxed,—nothing but a happy increase in holiness, and peace, and love. Do you imagine that the ten days in which she has been an inhabitant of that new home, can have made her accustomed to the feeling? No; nor ten weeks, nor ten months neither. Do you not fancy how, often, when sent on some work for the King Whom we all alike serve,—some work, very probably, of kindness to ourselves, of protection over this house,—the feeling must have come naturally: "Now I must take care lest I should be led into sin;" and the instantaneous and glorious recollection:

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"But I cannot sin; 'he that is dead hath ceased from sin.'"

"I will go to them that are at rest." Surely they are: only not in the sense of rest as distinguished from work: in that sense, they rest *not*, day nor night: but rest, as opposed to care; rest, as incompatible with fatigue. And there, again: imagine the delight of being able to work for GOD, without the drawbacks that arise, not only from a body of weakness and decay, but from the weakness and weariness of the mind itself. If our work for GOD could always be what we have sometimes here been privileged to find it,—oh, what a happiness! And then consider what is the best of our service here as compared to that of the land where His servants *shall* serve Him! I do not wonder that the great Saints of old have always so lovingly dwelt on that rest: "Let us *labour* therefore to enter into that rest." Indeed, nothing shews one better the difference between the poor miserable service of these last ages, and that of earlier times, than the different interpretations which the two have given to that text, "By night on my bed, I sought Him Whom my soul loveth." Our commentators see in it an idle, listless, half-hearted manner of seeking: a seeking that is no seeking. Not so the saintly

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interpreters. They see in that bed, in that night, in that seeking, the perfect oneness, the completed intimacy of the Bride and the Bridegroom: the more she is shut out from others, the more she is shut in with Him: the darker and deeper the night, the more trusting and perfect her love. It is indeed the people that dwell at rest. "Shall it ever be," says S. Angela of Foligno, "that I shall thus, O JESUS, that art my JESUS, be Thine? That I can see nothing but Thee, feel nothing but Thee; that the hand stretched for me on the Cross shall embrace me in the Kingdom? Am I, the feeblest, and poorest, and unworthiest of all Thine elect, to repose on that soft bed of eternal felicity? vigils at an end: for who would watch for Thee, when he may rest with Thee? fastings over: for who would hunger in Thy absence, when he may feast in, yea, and on, Thy presence? Is it possible that after the going softly all these years of my pilgrimage in the heaviness of my soul, I shall possess Thee, O my rest after labour; Thee, O my liberty after prison; Thee, O my joy after sorrow; Thee, O my love after strife; Thee, O my perfect safety after danger; Thee, O my all in all, after emptiness and nothingness?" Yes: when she wrote these words, it seemed as impossible, it

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seemed as difficult to realize, it seemed as far off to her as it does to us now. But yet the time came: she was sent for by the King: the gates of Shushan the palace were opened for her; with joy and gladness was she brought, and entered into the King's palace. And will not the time so come for you? Has it not, for two that have laboured with you, but who now rest? Rest in that glorious Sabbath, which, whatever its duration, will terminate in the yet more glorious Sunday of everlasting blessedness?

"That dwell safely: all of them dwelling without bars, having neither bars nor gates." Marvellous is the wisdom contained in that verse. They dwell safely: why? And the plain sense is,—because they have no bars or gates; that which seems to us,—and indeed is,—our safeguard, is also the great sign and proof of our danger. Our seven Psalms, armour of proof against the seven deadly sins,—they cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We, while GOD spares us here, shall repeat them again and again—our happier Sisters can no longer need them, could no longer use them. Litanies, Fasts, Vigils, Confessions, all noble pieces of armour from GOD's own armoury, must then more gloriously be laid aside.

And then, the reason. "To take a spoil, and

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to take a prey;" or, as the Hebrew has it still more strikingly, "To spoil the spoil, and to prey the prey." "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence." Now, judge for yourselves whether it does so from you. You know what efforts you do make. You know what efforts you are capable of making for anything on which your heart is really and earnestly set. And you can compare the two. For my part, I have to watch the continual swaying this way and that, of the war, the hand-to-hand fight, between you and Satan—between each of you and Satan. Would I could do more to help you forward to the victory! But GOD grant—and this I pray with all my heart and soul every day and night of my life—that so far as I can, I may;—that, little as the best must be, I may not do less than that little. GOD grant I may never forget—what neither must you ever forget—that, if I do fail in that, then this Sisterhood for me will be the most miserable of all miserable things,—only a heavy weight and a fast rope, to plunge me into ruin. But yet: "Because Thou hast been my Helper, therefore under the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice."

Two of you I have seen, as I firmly believe, pass that Jordan in safety. Why should not the loving mercy that has helped us, help us

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still? "The LORD's arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear." You know that all those things which are the chief blessings of the text, when you enter into them in GOD's good time, will be your great and most fearful curses, if you try to enter into them before that time. Unwalled villages here—you know that they are ruin. Unguarded moments, unwatched times of recreation, unwatched speeches, looks, thoughts—you know for yourselves how destruction, utter destruction, may come in by any such. If *here* you "go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely," you know how little that rest is like the rest which remaineth for the people of GOD.

It seems as if, at a time when the Church has no especial lesson for us, then the GOD of Nature speaks to us by His external works: by the harvest and the autumn, of the eternal garner, and those reapers who are the Angels, and the tares allowed to grow together with the wheat till harvest time; and then again, He shews us the leaves, assuming in the last stage of their earthly existence, the colours, crimson, purple, and gold, which are more properly the hues of Heaven; just as, the nearer and nearer one of GOD's true servants comes to the time of his great change, so he more entirely assumes

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to himself the hues of Paradise. You cannot think, my Sisters, how many and many such a parable spoke to me about you in my walks last week. And this again struck me, (as it always does when talking about S. Margaret's, which, as we all know, *is* talked of,) how entirely it is assumed that they who do what you have done must be most true, most devoted, most holy servants of GOD. I do not for one moment think that your external service of GOD is the least exaggerated; often I have heard it, even by those that were most in love with it, spoken of as less than it really is. But then, you know what S. Paul says: "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." And so: they that do such things as you do, declare plainly that your dear LORD is your all in all. It must be taken so; no other motive can be sufficient to account for the effort, the self-denial, the misery, you all sometimes have to endure. But then: oh fearful judgment, to be looked on as Saints, unless one is conscious of trying to be so! To be pointed out as acting always and perfectly for our dear LORD, if we allow other lords, other thoughts, feelings, wishes, to have dominion over us! For this very reason, that GOD has so far honoured your external work, you must strive, try, labour,

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agonise, to make the work in your own souls more and more real, deep, earnest, perfect.

And you will. Think of those who have gone before; think of the eyes fixed on you; remember how Satan would glory if any of you fell; remember the honour your perseverance will obtain for your own LORD; call to mind that, after all, the struggle is comparatively but short; that you have Almightiness on your side; that having loved His own which are in the world, He loveth them unto the end; and then say—say, with full determination—say, in GOD'S strength—say, whatever it cost—say, however many enemies oppose:—"I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey."

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXVII.

TO RECEIVE AND TO GIVE.

"*Thus saith the* LORD GOD, *If the Prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; and it shall be their possession by inheritance.*"—EZEK. xlvi. 16.

[EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1863.]

OF all the difficult chapters in the Bible, these last in Ezekiel, about the future Temple, are, by the consent of all, about the most difficult. The Church has always steadily refused to see in them the real description of a real building, which shall be erected at the restoration of the Jews: and yet, if the whole is entirely mystical, what wonderful minutiæ of symbolical meaning in a description quite as minute as that of the tabernacle of Moses, or the temple of Solomon! Of a verity, we have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; and the living water which it contains deep also.

Nevertheless, scattered here and there throughout these chapters are particular verses which

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are not so mystical but that we may easily fathom their meaning. Such a vision, for instance, as that of the living waters that gushed out of the temple; how, a thousand cubits from the source, the waters were to the ankles; a thousand more, and they were to the knees; yet a thousand, and to the loins; a thousand yet, "and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." None ever doubted that here we have the spread of the Gospel from its rise in the upper room on Mount Sion, to that day when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. So again, that famous text: "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the GOD of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut," has always been taken of the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Mother of GOD. And the verse I read you just now, (and I should not much wonder if some of you had never noticed it before,) has a very clear, yes, and very dear, meaning for us.

"If the Prince give a gift unto any of His sons." And GOD be praised, there is for us no *if* in that matter; for what has He given, or rather what has He not given, to those who

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ought to be in the highest sense His sons, namely, His Priests! He has bound Himself by His own sacred promise, He, GOD over all, blessed for ever, to obey the voice of sinful man: bound Himself, as He was Incarnate once, that He might remain our Brother for ever, so now again and again to humble himself to assume the forms of Bread and Wine; the Eternal Word vouchsafes to descend at the word of a Priest; "the Word," as of old time, reaching "the Heavens" (where the all-sufficient merits of the Sacrifice of Calvary are pleaded and renewed in the Sacrifice of the Altar): "but it stood upon the earth," or how could earthly hands celebrate, or earthly lips receive, those tremendous Mysteries? Truly this is a gift indeed for the Prince to bestow on His sons! It is written concerning the great battle of Bethhoron, "There was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel." But what was the miracle of the sun's standing still on Mount Gibeon to the miracle that the Sun of all glory should descend on earth, veiling His splendour, and that for the same reason: "for the LORD fought for Israel?"

The Jews have a legend that, when Moses had said to GOD: "I beseech Thee, shew me

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Thy glory"—little knowing what he was asking —GOD permitted one infinitely small spark of that glory to fall on one of the mountains of the range of Sinai. And in an instant, the solid rock blazed up and fell into dust. And as Moses stood trembling at the sight, "Didst thou think," the LORD said unto him, "that mortal man could behold the full blaze of My brightness, and live?" It may be that reference is made to this in that verse, "If He do but touch the hills, they shall smoke." And yet that splendour, only veiled, we look upon, our hands handle, we are one with It, and It is one with us.

And again: is not this a royal gift indeed, when the Prince, Whom His people have so often offended, against Whom they have so often sent the messengers of rebellious thoughts, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," commits to His sons that ministry of reconciliation? bids them stand between the living and the dead, put on the incense of His own commission, and stay the plague? Is not this a royal gift indeed, a power which evil men and seducers of old time thought too great for the Prince Himself? ratified too with the word of Him, Who cannot lie: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and

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whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

And is not this another gift to His sons, and, this time, to those of every rank and degree in His House? the Water, which He shed out of His own most precious Side, both Water and Blood, to sanctify to the remission of sins? And thousand, thousand other gifts: less, infinitely less, than these: but still of infinite value. Not only the Law and the Prophets, not only that bundle of myrrh, the Psalms: but every hymn cast into the treasury of the Church, every meditation and sermon of every Saint, every valiant deed of every Martyr; every life-long war of every Confessor. If these things were given as little offerings to Him, He gives them back again for our help and our comfort. As one sees in the treasury of a mediæval church objects of different value indeed, but all precious: some shrines that are only decked with coral or pearls, some that glitter with rubies, others with topaz, or with the king of gems, sapphire; so it is here. Some dear little child-like prayers; some heroic efforts: some short rough passages to the Royal Palace; some, if less bitter, more prolonged.

But now see, these are given, why? "If the Prince give a gift unto any of His

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sons, the inheritance thereof shall be *his* sons'."

Now, my Sisters, it would be easy enough for me, yes, and profitable enough for me perhaps, to shew you once more how what is given to the Priest of any Religious House belongs so clearly to every member of it. But I would rather take it in a higher sense for you. I have always told you how you stand, to a certain extent, in the same condition as Priests. And therefore, what you have received, you are to give: and as you have received it, so to give it.

You cannot deny the grace. But, in giving what you can give others, are all of you perfectly doing your best? I will tell you where that law, even in the Old Testament, is set down most clearly: "My son, blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest anything." Now, my Sisters, I leave that to some of you to think over, whether, and especially with respect to what the world would call your smaller, your more every-day, duties here, you have done them without blemishing them. See: the text tells you what the Prince has given you: and also tells you why He gave it you; the inheritance is not for you, but for those whom you teach.

And sometimes it is so hard a thing to pass

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on that inheritance. I was telling you, some time since, how the Ursulines had, no doubt as being in these latter times the strictest Order, been exposed to the more immediate assaults of Satan. I think also you know the name of Surin, whose writings shew how truly he knew what fighting the good fight was. Well: at the end of the seventeenth century, he was put in charge of a house especially so vexed. He stayed there, till the work which he was sent to do was performed, and that was a task of three years: and such was the struggle, and such its physical effects, that, though he survived so as to do more or less work for a few years, he was thoroughly broken down.

That is an extreme example. Certainly it is. But, my Sisters, so for you; what has been given you, has been given you, not for yourselves, but for those among whom you work. Does *He* give Himself half-wise to you? Does He accept you to a certain point, and then cast you off? Only remember: that what He does for you, you are *bound* to do for others. There is some one particular work from which each of you most shrinks. And what then? Is not that the especial task which He gives you to do for Him? Anyhow, this *is* what you *may* especially shew your love to Him in. It is not the diffi-

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culty in itself, but the difficulty to *you*. You know, several of you, my Sisters, whether here present or not, where I think your temptation to lie:—in your home duties; that the hard, dangerous work of external labour you can undertake cheerfully, but not so what, the world would say, any one can take in hand.

And this I think ought to be the lesson, on the whole. Our dear LORD gave us these infinitely great privileges: He gave us others, lesser only by comparison. "He made the stars also." He gave us the example which none can follow save utterly afar off: He also left us the example which He lived out in His Human Nature. Now, my Sisters, the prophet says, (I am sure most truly for us,) "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" As it has been well said: You wish to do great things. Of course you do; as Sisters, you ought. Then: either you *can* do little things, or you can not. If you can not,—as you know very well, to wish after the greater, is it much more than building castles in the air? If you can, and do not, (and I think some, whether here or not, have occasion to think of this,) how can you expect that higher grace for greater difficulties?

And now, one thing more. It was said by our

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dear LORD, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." So shall a Christian's temptations, always. Acquit yourselves here well, my Sisters; here in the common room, here in your mutual conversation, above all, here in the Orphanage: and then indeed go out to work, in itself harder, to fatigue, danger, death, if so it is to be,—and what follows? "Whether we live therefore or die, we are the LORD'S."

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXVIII.

TEKEL.

"TEKEL: *thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.*"—DAN. v. 27.

[SEPTEMBER, 1863.*]

THAT always seems to me about the most fearful verse in the Bible: as, with the singular exception of the return of the Red Sea on the host of the Egyptians, the scene must have been the most fearful recorded in Scripture. The Romans had a very noble proverb, "The gods have feet of wool;" that is, vengeance comes on a sinner so stealthily, so softly, so without observation.

Even now, although Belshazzar knew it not, the Persian and the Median troops were marching through the dried river-bed of the Euphrates, in the heart of the city; for Babylon, they say, was so large that it was three days before its capture was known in all parts; and then, while the horrible scene of sacrilege was carrying on at the banquet-table, that ghastly bodiless hand

* Before the Profession of four Sisters.

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appeared on the wall, and traced the unknown characters, glowing out, we may suppose, in a kind of phosphoric light. Up to that profanation of the Temple vessels, Belshazzar might have repented as his father had done: afterwards, there was no more place for repentance.

Shall I tell you, my Sisters, what made me think of this text? It was the looking forward to that which we hope to do on Sunday. Every time a Sister is received, especially every time one is professed, it is the parts and duties of those who themselves have long since been so, to examine themselves, and that not carelessly and shrinkingly, but diligently and bravely, as they hear the vows made by, and the prayers offered for, her, as to how truly their own vows have been kept,—how earnestly they have been endeavouring to make good the prayers once said for themselves.

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." And that is what makes a Profession so solemn a thing. All, we know it, must in that Day be weighed in the balance; but not all in the same. And this is what our Sisters are coming forward to do; this is what all of you in some respects, some of you altogether, have done. They are going to ask that they may be weighed in a stricter balance than ever before:

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because they are about to make promises which they never made before. What are Evangelical counsels to others will thenceforth become Evangelical commands to them. They are about to ask their LORD, not, GOD forbid! that He would be extreme to mark what is done amiss; but they are about to ask, nay, and to say it with all reverence, to challenge Him to, a stricter examination.

And that examination, for the whole succeeding life. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Yes: but the sentence on earth, whatever it might have been in the time of the Apostles, with their supernatural insight into men's minds and motives, is not so irreversible now.

There have been doubtless those who, having been, by a mistaken judgment of the Church, given over to Satan, and in consequence, through the secular arm, condemned to suffer at the stake,—nevertheless, like Joan of Arc, have appealed from the earthly to the Heavenly tribunal; and, who can doubt it? with the full certainty that man's judgment would be reversed, and that GOD's judgment would make the rejected here, the elected there.

But then remember, there is a sadder reverse.

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I might be called to stand, to pray, to celebrate, by the deathbed of a Sister. What if she were conscious of retaining in her heart some unconfessed sin, unconfessed even then? *I* might say: "I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST," when, in a few minutes more, that terrible, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," would be pronounced. *I* have absolved? Yes; but at the Heavenly Tribunal comes the "*Mene.*" "'Mene; GOD hath numbered thy kingdom,'—that royal kingdom, which gave thee power over thine own heart, over all its temptations, over all its evil suggestions; 'thy kingdom,' with which thou didst promise to wage war against Satan and all his hosts, not only in thyself, but in the poor outcasts of this world also; 'thy kingdom,' which might have been the foretaste, the type, the earnest, of thy LORD'S Heavenly Kingdom. GOD hath weighed thee in the balances. He has reckoned up thy strength: has seen what thou mightest have done, and what thou had done.

He has seen this and that encroachment permitted, this and that inroad allowed, this and that infirmity acquiesced in. He numbered it before, oh how often! Thou hast professed to number it. Thou hast knelt by the side of His

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Priest: thou hast told him how thou hadst left undone those things that thou oughtest to have done, and done those things that thou oughtest not to have done; but not really, not earnestly, not whole-heartedly. And therefore now, once more,—now, the very last time of all, now fatally, now irrevocably, 'GOD hath numbered thy kingdom, *and finished it.*' It is gone, that beautiful kingdom which thou mightest have possessed; it is gone, that glorious mansion which thou mightest have inherited; it is gone, that celestial kiss which was reserved for thee. They shall enter in, they, whose lamps are burning; they shall enter in, who are found watching; they shall enter in, who have made their robes white, or kept them undefiled; they shall walk with the Spotless Lamb in white, for they are worthy. What profit to thee, that thou didst choose the harder balances, and therefore wast found wanting? that thou didst not conquer in the fight, because, of thine own accord, thou didst pray to be set in that part of it where the battle was fiercest? Oh, poor, poor Sister!"

And so again. Once more think of the quiet room; the Sisters kneeling round you in prayer; the death-like stillness, the deathly feel of such a chamber. I may have said those glorious, those most glorious words, those words which

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have cheered the passage of so many a servant of GOD across the dark river: "CHRIST, That suffered His Agony for thee, preserve thee now, in this agony of death; CHRIST, That hung on the Cross for thee, preserve thy soul from everlasting death; CHRIST, That rose the third day, lift up thy body in the Resurrection of eternal Life!" Yes: mine or any human lips may say that; but what if the doom above reverses our sentence, with its "TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting?"

Ah, my Sisters! I, if I were spared, and the others, might be kneeling yet round the bed, yet offering the last prayers, yet praying that Angels would take the poor, yet terrified, yet palpitating soul into the bosom of Abraham; and even at that moment the sentence might be pronounced from the Throne on high: "'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.' Thou art weighed in the balances of a profession beyond others, weighed in the balances of daily Celebrations, of hours of prayer so frequent, of confessions so often: weighed in the balances of a dress that shut thee off from the ordinary pursuits and pleasures of the world; of a cross that hung on the breast that had no true love for its LORD; of a veil which did not shut out those eyes from beholding vanity; of a ring,

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which did not in real verity consecrate that right hand to GOD. 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.'" Wanting *then!* and the prayers that we say,—wanting then, and the prayers that the whole Church might say,—what could they avail?

Can I say less? No: but can I also say more? "Thou art weighed in the balances." Oh most blessed sentence! Oh prophecy which ought to make our hearts leap with joy! In one sense, many different balances: in another, GOD be praised, only one. In what balances? (for mark you, it is well said, *the* balances.) You know what day that was in which they were set up; you know in what place. The day, as the Prophet speaks, the cloudy and dark day. The place, that place where the LORD shall make a feast of fat things. Yes: you will be weighed; but how weighed? when He that hung on the Cross is the Judge! How weighed, when the very arms of that Cross are the beams of the Balance!

"Weighed in the balances!" Yes, but what is on the other side? O LORD JESUS! why were all Thy sufferings? why were all Thy labours? why was all Thy enduring that manifold contradiction of sinners against Thyself? Why, on the one side of the Balance, that most dear,

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that most glorious Balance, were hung those then future Litanies, "By Thy Conception,—by Thy Nativity,—by Thy Circumcision,—by Thy Woes,—by Thy Scourges,—by Thy Cross," but because on this side were to be weighed our future offences, offences of Thine own ones, offences to be forgiven much, because of the much love?

"Thou art weighed in the balances." O my Sisters, in what balances could we be weighed, if not in these?

> "On whose dear arms, so widely flung,
> The weight of this world's ransom hung,
> The price of humankind to pay,
> And spoil the spoiler of his prey."

Only now, beware, you who are about to enter this warfare, as also you who have entered it, that it be in very earnest with the whole body, the whole soul, the whole spirit. To me, how much easier, how much pleasanter it would be, if I might speak to you here, of the happiness I wish to see you enjoy! But it is that day on which our thoughts must dwell; that day which will come to us all; that day which, whenever you kneel by me in Confession, you ought to bear in mind; for, if now, in the silence and loneliness of a separate room, and to a fellow-sinner, Confession is an awful thing, what, when

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before men and angels, every secret thought, every hidden deed, shall be made known? and concerning this I ought to be thinking whenever I speak to you; that it may not be said to me, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant."

O my Sisters, shall we not all, *will* we not all,—you who have given your whole selves to your dear LORD, you who now are looking forward to do so; (and I, may I not add myself?) —shall we not all so labour, that, when we come to that terrible balance—and we shall come to it—then the words dear beyond all dearness, comfortable beyond all comfort, may be: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy LORD?"

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXXIX.

JEZREEL.

"*And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the* LORD, *I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.*"—HOSEA ii. 21, 22.

[SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. 1863.]

"THOU hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." If that be true, as it is, of every book in Holy Scripture, most emphatically is it true of Hosea: true, as to the literal difficulties of the prophet's words, and true, as to the moral difficulties of his actions. And he, of all the prophets, if we except Jeremiah, had the saddest and most afflicted life. His mission lasted at least sixty-five years; a hopeless mission, humanly speaking, from the first, because the long death-agony of the kingdom of Israel, commenced just after he began to prophesy. For after the extinction of the house of Jehu, that kingdom was only a military despotism: one leader murdering and succeeding another. Shallum slew

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Zachariah; Menahem slew Shallum; Pekah slew the son of Menahem; Hoshea slew Pekah. My Sisters, there is something very striking in this lesson: that GOD sometimes seems to set a hopeless work. Any of you, in nursing, may find such utter ignorance, such profound carelessness, such total hardness of heart, that it seems useless to say anything, to make any attempt for the soul. Never think it. If your efforts can do nothing for the individual person for whom they are made, they may serve others. Hosea's sixty-five years of prophecy, were, so far as Israel were concerned, worse than thrown away, because they only increased the condemnation of that miserable people. But they have left a book of glorious comfort to the Church,—a prophecy which, with the single exception of Isaiah, sets forth our dear LORD more brightly and clearly than any other.

"I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth." You all know how seldom intercessory prayer, of living men for living men, is alluded to in the Old Testament; how even more seldom that of departed souls. But here we have one glorious instance: "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth." Here, indeed, we have the Communion of Saints, that article of faith, which, in their

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manifold explanations of the Creed, the greatest theologians of the Church seem to explain so coldly and so shortly; and which yet we, by what may be called a baptismal instinct, enter into from the very first. And notice this. Some articles in our dear faith, heathens and Mahometans have either learned or guessed; but this, that we are all one,—we, poor travellers on earth,—they, if not as yet triumphant, at least secure, denizens of Heaven; this never for one moment entered into their minds. And yet, what a dear thought that is, the mixing together of the two worlds; and especially in the Blessed Eucharist. Those who offer,—those for whom the Sacrifice is offered,—all united; while the holy Angels, stainless and temptationless, are also here brought into contact with us: with our LORD's dear servants departed, and with His dear servants living.

But this I want you especially to notice, "The earth shall hear the corn, and the wine: and the oil." My Sisters, this lesson *does* belong to you. "The corn of the mighty, and the wine that blossometh into virgins:" these are not for the benefit of those alone who have devoted themselves to the Religious Life. God forbid! Take the lesson home to yourselves. That Corn, that Wine, oh, how often have you received! That Oi

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the healer and comforter of wounds, often also, in absolution. Now: wherever you go forth, ought not those to whom you minister to hear, to have the advantage of, to share in the victory of, all your helps? I want you to realize this. That just as when Sisters of Charity first went out in France,—the thing being quite unheard of—the idea of women consecrated to GOD being only as of persons who had interest or income to obtain a place in convents, which allowed every worldly luxury and amusement,—when that great Saint was raised up, in a most dissipated and luxurious age, to bring in many children to their LORD,—so now it is with you. I want this: that they, whosoever they be, to whom you minister, may in you feel the effect of the corn, and the wine, and the oil. All that strength must enable you to work out its natural effect. He Who in that last, and holiest, and dearest night, so gave the Corn, and the Wine,—is He less ready, is He less anxious, to help you now?

For this cause He daily gives Himself to you, for this cause He tabernacles in this house: that you may give yourselves to others; that you yourselves may take up your temporary abode among the poor and the sick. Only be true to your vocation; only let that

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which you have received be shewn: and so let the corn and wine and oil be heard.

But then comes the most difficult part of the verse: "And they shall hear Jezreel." The most difficult, but also the most lovely; because all through this prophecy, Jezreel, which is only another name for Israel, has been taken as the type of all sin, as the mother of all abomination, as the likeness of heresy and schism combined in one. But now all that is forgiven; that marvellous outpouring of the HOLY GHOST, which perhaps some of you may see, but, whether or not, which will be seen, will indeed make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. And see how the two passages agree: "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem;" "And they shall hear Jezreel." So they shall. Just as the Church, though defiled, yet in her LORD'S sight is comely, because of her love, so the name, Jezreel, which to the world would make the synagogue most odious, is the very name by which her King and her Husband promises to bestow His grace on her. If it had been said, "They shall hear Israel,"—no such great wonder, for Israel "had power with GOD: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed." But Jezreel! the name which, like Nazareth, was that of a city out of which no

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good thing could come! Might I not well say, as I did just now, that, Isaiah excepted, Hosea is *the* Evangelical prophet?

Then see, each for yourselves, how far you may help on this prophecy; which in real truth is only that benediction which our dear LORD left with His Apostles before His Passion. If there be one help more than another which may —which will, some day,—bring to pass that glorious unity of the Church—it is the Sacrament of peace: the Sacrament, on the one hand, prepared out of so many separate grains of wheat; on the other, out of so many several grapes: by its own very nature, the Sacrament of unity. And remember this: that the more each one of us ourselves, is living in the spirit of that peace, the more we are taking not only in our mouths, but acting out in our lives, that petition, so infinitely dear to every Christian heart: "Thy Kingdom,"—that Kingdom which is based on the other and later petition,—"That they all may be one"—"Thy Kingdom come."

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XL.

GRADUALLY.

"*Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the* LORD: *His going forth is prepared as the morning.*"—Hos. vi. 3.

[EPIPHANY. 1861.]

THE text, like the Day, is of Manifestation: and both text and day are specially, my Sisters, connected with you. This is the one object of your lives: to see more and more of Him *here*, Whom you hope to see perfectly, without veil or shadow *there*. And the only rule: "We shall know, if we follow on to know." Wherever the star leads, you must go: wherever the pillar of cloud directs, you must journey. Rough paths, foul weather, opposing enemies,—these, if it be GOD'S will, now: one day the rough paths will be changed into the green pastures and still waters: the foul weather, into the everlasting spring: the opposing enemies, into the Alleluias of perpetual and perfect peace. They have left you an example, those saintly Kings: and every

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service, every Sacrament, every action of your lives should only be a portion of the following their pattern out.

"We *shall* know." Then it follows, that as yet we do not know. A little you see of Him, kneeling at those desks of yours: and I well hope, if each of you looks back to the last Epiphany, your sight is stronger than then: and His manifestation of Himself clearer and dearer. And if in prayer, how much more in the Royal Banquet He provides for you daily! This is indeed the test of progress: if on the whole, (for ebbs and flows there will be of love and of faith,) if on the whole, He is better known to you in breaking of Bread: if the hands that have so often handled Him are more simply and lovingly doing His work: if the lips that have so often touched the life-giving chalice have been thereby increasingly hallowed, as the prophet's by the coal from the altar.

"If we follow on." It is an *if* indeed. It is so much easier to be content with the little we have done: the not making "all the people to labour" in taking Ai. And yet, not one trifling action of the day but may be such a following. Little actions, and little temptations: little duties, and little worries, and little cares. A grain of sand fretting the oyster may produce a

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pearl fit for a king's diadem. Little vexations borne well *may* turn into gems, if you will so have it, for your future crown.

"I know," S. Bernard says, "that the pillar of cloud sometimes rested in the wilderness, and then the people pitched their tents. But your cloud never tarries, never rests. Day by day, night by night, it guides forward them that will follow it. Who knows through what kind of land it will lead each of you? Whether through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein is drought, and wild beasts, and fiery flying serpents; or by the green pastures and the still waters? Leave all that in the King's hands. This only: follow on with a good courage; follow on with a perfect trust; follow on without ever pausing. There will be Home enough after the journey; rest enough after the weariness; peace enough after the battle; victory enough to make up for many defeats.

It goes on: "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Yes: nothing more tender, nothing more lovely than that, the way in which the King reveals to you by degrees His love, makes you more His, makes Himself more yours. Morning—because so much darkness here: so much of "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter:" so

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much of "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him." There is not one of you, my Sisters, that cannot enter into that prayer of the Grecian warrior, in Homer, who, when sudden darkness came over the battle, cried to his god: "Only give light, and, if it be so, let me fall." Yes: many and many a Sister, a real, earnest, loving Sister, has had that prayer on her lips for years: "Only let me see that Thou really art loving me, really art leading me, that I am not left to myself, that this is Thine Arm on which I am leaning,—and any pain were well borne for that!" Ah! that is only His going forth as the morning: morning which, to how many and many of those faithful ones, has long enough been changed into perfect and unclouded day!

And morning again, because of its chilliness. What Sister yet, but ever found this one of her bitterest complaints? "I can say the words in prayer, but my heart seems to have no power to go along with them. I can confess the actual sin, but it is as though I had no power of feeling true sorrow." It is a curious thing (so universal is this complaint) that each European language, of those where the Church exists, has its own name to describe it. We name it *listlessness:* the French, *sècheresse:* German, Spanish, Portu-

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guese, all have their especial term. I have read, my Sisters, the biographies of as many women, I suppose, who had entered the Religious Life as any English priest: before I had to do with you, from interest only, (which, I hope, means that GOD was leading me on to have the care of Sisters—ah! and I wish I had followed His lead better)! since then, from duty. And this feeling, of walking in darkness, and having no light, of coldness in prayer, and no warmth of love, is, it seems to me, prevalent in French Sisters beyond others, in German Sisters less than others. I say this, to shew you how much natural temperament and national character have to do with it.

Darkness and chilliness, is that all the morning can bring? What of the dew? so marvellous a likeness of that grace which, till the LORD of grace was born, was, in its Christian sense, impossible. See; falling from regions of which we know nothing, sometimes so abundantly, sometimes so sparingly: not one little leaf, not one poor blade, unvisited by it: the effect of the sun's heat, and in so lovely a manner reflecting the rays of that same sun in their sevenfold hues. And grace? "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and so the dew falleth where it listeth: and yet there are reasons, known to the

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GOD of Nature, for one and the other. And to us grace seems to come so uncertainly: sometimes, we know, we are helped beyond all our hope, sometimes we fall little short of utter failure. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." And then: it visits every little action as well as every heroic deed of courage: it gave S. Faith sweet rest on her bedstead of red-hot iron; it may be with you in dusting a room, or washing a patient's clothes. And with you, as the sun-ray is with the dew: its own pure light separated into seven lovely colours, the seven graces of the Sevenfold SPIRIT.

"His going forth is prepared as the morning." One thing more. Has not that respect to the beauty of the morning? Must not He, (if you are really clinging to Him,) must not He of Whom, so far as this world is concerned, it is written, "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him," must not He be manifesting to you something more every week, of His own beauty? Ah, my Sisters! And not only *to* you, but *in* and *by* you? I hope, though with trembling, that it is so: and it is a dear comfort to me when, (by chance, as men speak,) I hear that some one action of any one of you

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has made a bystander look past you to your LORD.

So, you see, we come to this: that the whole of your lives ought to be only one long Epiphany. By degrees, here a little and there a little, this especial darkness dispersed, that especial ray of light let in: so you gain the first faintest foretaste of the Beatific Vision. And, how in every way, in every event of your lives, may He thus manifest Himself! Come, let us take three dear mediæval legends, and apply them to yourselves. It may be, while you are doing something—what the world would call—menial office in a cottage,—it may be as when that saintly Bishop was, on Maundy Thursday, washing the feet of the selected twelve, he perceived that there was a thirteenth, and at first imagined it a mere mistake of his steward: till, when he bent down to this last, he saw the mark of the Wound, that told Who indeed it was that accepted the service as to Himself. It may be without any especial reason, from no cause that you can remember, there comes such a fresh burst of love into your hearts: just as the infant LORD gave the gold ring of betrothal, when she was blushing of nothing less, to S. Katharine of Sienna. And then again, it may be in ministering to some loathsome disease, as it was

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with the Spanish warrior Saint, who, when every moment was of value in carrying on the war, drew rein to attend to the wounds of a poor beggar, Who, when they had been dressed, by His glorious transfiguration and cruciferous nimbus, made good His own saying, "I was sick, and ye visited *Me*."

But it is not merely, "His going forth is as the morning;" but "is *prepared* as the morning." And how that?

You know, my Sisters, what natural philosophers tell us: how, if there were no atmosphere, the moment the sun sank below the horizon, there would be total darkness,—the moment the sun emerged above it, from total darkness there would be total light. Earthly eyes could not, they tell us, bear the change. Certainly spiritual eyesight, in the manifestation of our dear LORD, could not. It must be by degrees: it must be precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little; it must be, "The Kingdom of GOD cometh not with observation."

But oh, my Sisters! that it may come in its own way, increasingly, among you! What else can be the great wish of my heart? GOD some day bring us to His Perfect Vision, where, not under types and shadows, but

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face to face, we shall see Him, our dear LORD JESUS CHRIST!

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen

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SERMON XLI.

THE LEADING OF LOVE.

"*I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; . . . I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.*"—HOSEA x. 3, 4.

[CHRISTMAS NIGHT, 1860.]

THAT lesson with which the text begins, "I taught Ephraim also to go," is it not the lesson which our dear LORD is this day, and all days, teaching you,—the very end and aim of this House itself? I remember once, in one of the quaint old village churches of which Normandy is full, seeing a mother teach her little one to walk in the nave: first, as she brought it in, to make the sign of the Cross, and then to try its tiny feet along the hard, rough pavement. I have often thought since how good an emblem, dearest Sisters, it is, both of you and for you The journey of your life, that, in one sense, is undertaken in a church: "I will dwell in the House of the LORD for ever:" the sanctity of

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your self-dedication ought everywhere to surround you, and to hallow every, the most trifling action. Then, the way is rough as ever that child's way was; and it must be begun in the same manner, namely, by the Sign of the Cross. Then you have a firm, loving arm thrown round you: an arm more firm, more loving than any mother's: "I will go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD, and will make mention of Thy righteousness only."

"I taught Ephraim also to go." Whither? Whither, but as He Himself went out. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice." To go on that Via Dolorosa, along which the Cross must be borne manfully, and the end of which is the Cross itself; that way lined with mocking and insulting multitudes, only a few trembling women, only one or two disciples, on the side of the truth and of love: the world banded together in defence of falsehood and hate. "Taught him to go," in ages afterwards, to the amphitheatre, and face the lions,—to the stake, and give his body to the flames,—to the rack, and again see the saying fulfilled, "I may tell all my bones, they stand staring and looking upon me." To go forth among heathen nations,

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and preach the everlasting Gospel at the sacrifice of everything; all earthly possessions, comfort, pleasure, in the first place,—life itself at last. To go, in a narrower and straiter way than that in which the rest of men are called to walk; to the more abundant self-denial here, and the more abundant reward there; to the more plenteous sowing in tears now, and the more joyous harvest by-and-by. And can I remember the different ways in which GOD has taught His people, in times past, to go, and not remember that way, so rough, so contrary to flesh and blood, in which you are so often called to walk, and to which one of you is going out this day? See now the blessing beyond blessings of having a LORD, not only that can mightily help, but that can perfectly sympathize. You know how I long to assist you, when you thus go forth; how my thoughts, and prayers, and love, go along with you: how gladly I would spend and be spent in lightening your burden. But you also know and feel that, in that way I never went forth; that, try to realize your difficulties as I may, the sympathy must be maimed and imperfect, because I never was myself in precisely similar position. Then raise your thoughts to the Great High Priest: and remember that His sympathy is as

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infinite as His Help: that while He is infinitely near you, He can infinitely feel for you. O dear Sisters, what would become of all of us in our several trials and infirmities, unless the words, "We have *such* an High Priest," were stamped on all! That High Priest Who will, to-morrow, give us here His Flesh to eat, and His Blood to drink, but not the less will be with your dear Sister in her isolated work: such an High Priest Who knows alike the difficulties and dangers of Priest and people; Who can feel for you,—in that He once bare the burden of all this world's guilt,—when you come to me here, and lay down your sins at the foot of the Cross: Who can feel for me when, not as I would, not as I ought, so weakly, so imperfectly, I try to help you in your distresses, and to guide you in your difficulties.

"Taking them by their arms." It is more than taking by the hand. It shews more helplessness on the part of her that is led, more strength, yes, and more love, on the part of Him that leads. Yes: more love, even though He should take those arms, and stretch them out on the Cross; your Cross, not more than His. "Ought not CHRIST," He said Himself, "to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" And so, ought not every

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faithful soul in like manner to suffer, if it would in like manner reign?

It goes on: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." And first of all He speaks, as first let us take it, of the Incarnation. He might, had He so willed, have drawn us to Himself by the cords, as it were, of a GOD. He, enthroned in the glory of His FATHER, surrounded by the adoring company of the Blessed Angels, might thus, had it been His good pleasure, from a distance, as a GOD afar off, have drawn us to Him. But instead of that, He came among us: He became one of us: He drew us men, as a Man Himself: He spoke to human affection, to human sympathy: He drew as as our Elder Brother, as the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," to the House of His Father and our Father. Those great Saints of old, who, with a holy boldness, pressed into the mysteries of GOD'S dealings with men, frequently discussed this question: Whether, if Adam had not fallen, the SON of GOD would have become Incarnate? And they constantly resolve that He would: that the very fact of creating such a creature as man is, involved the necessity that the SON of GOD should become Man. But, dearest Sisters, as we are encouraged, and almost commanded, in all our little actions

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to see a type of Him, told to take comfort in it, told to follow the footsteps of His most blessed paths wherever we trace them, are you not privileged yourselves to be in some faint degree, in your more especial works for His sake, types of His coming into the world? "The earth," says Isaiah, "is utterly broken down," "and shall be removed like a cottage:" "the earth is clean dissolved." Into this poor ruinous cottage He came: into the midst of sickness, misery, sin, rejection: came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister: came to raise the fallen, to cheer the faint, to tend the wounded: to pour in the oil and wine, the grace of the HOLY GHOST, the virtue of His Sacraments. Go, then, dearest Sisters, when you go out, remembering that you have a type of Him to accomplish, a likeness of Him to fulfil and make good. We all profess to wish that we were like Him: here He gives you the means and the opportunity. This glorifies your work: this should make you cheerfully embrace the heavy cross.

But notice the two clauses: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." He alludes, as it were, to human friendship; but next He passes that, and speaks of a deeper and sweeter feeling yet. It is no longer the

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love of friend to friend, it is the love of the Bridegroom to the Bride. And see how the other words strengthen at the same time. It is no longer the cords, but the bands: bands, that rivet more closely, bands that rivet more indissolubly. The strongest band that there is, dearest Sisters, is one light, unornamented, simple ring of gold. It has shewn often enough how much stronger it is than death, how much more lasting than the grave. By this band He would bind to Him those who, for His sake, give up all they have; who, to Him, give up all they love, strength, health, time, power, life, their very selves. Oh, what is it so to love, so to be loved by, the GOD Who is Love!

But let us turn the words round, and see if they have not a deeper meaning for us yet. It is not only He Who thus draws us with cords of a man, with the bands of love, but, to say it with all reverence, it is we who draw Him. As the old Compline hymn in Ascension-tide says:—

> "What love of Thine was that which led
> To take our woes upon Thy Head;
> And pangs and cruel death to bear,
> To ransom us from death's despair?"

See what love can do! See how it can bring down the Eternal SON from His Eternal Throne,

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make Him the infant in the manger, make Him the exile and the tempted in the desert, set Him as a malefactor among malefactors, raise Him on the Cross itself, thenceforth the Tree of life and love and beauty! But even so, that hardly comes up to the text. Each of you, my dearest Sisters, may say, (take the words on your lips boldly,) "I drew Him with the bands of love!" Say, "I know that He hath set His love upon me, however wretched and weak and worthless I am: I know I could not love Him as I do, unless He had first loved me. I know I could not feel these yearnings after Him that I sometimes do, brief and soon lost though they are, unless the King Himself vouchsafed thus for a moment to reveal Himself to me in His beauty. I will not, I must not, deny His own work in myself. It is a wonder beyond all wonders (but then, He is the GOD that doeth wonders) that He should thus love me, thus seek to possess me, thus desire to set me before His Face for ever. But this being so, I will draw Him by the bands of that very love: I will hold Him fast, and will not let Him go: like the disciples of old, I will constrain Him to abide with me: like that afflicted mother, I will say, 'As the LORD liveth, and as Thy soul liveth,' as Thy Godhead is for ever united to Thy Man-

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hood, (and thence my hope,) 'I will not leave Thee.' If I come here to pour out my soul before Him, here He shall come also: if I go out on His work, He shall go forth with me likewise. He shall come to me, for He has given me the power of calling Him: He shall stay with me, for He has given me the power of detaining Him: in the fierce, burning sun, He shall be my great rock in a weary land: in the night of affliction, His left hand shall be under my head, and His right hand shall embrace me."

"It may be," says S. Paul, "it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you." And might I not turn this into a prayer for all of you? "I know, O LORD JESUS, that Thou Who hast thus loved them, thus chosen them, thus longed for them, wilt abide and winter with these Thy dear children in the coldness and dreariness of this world, except their own faith or their own love fail. I know Thou wouldest not have written so large a letter of love to them with Thine own hand, unless that hand was to guide and protect them, to soothe their griefs, and to wipe away their tears. I know that, although when I would speak to them of that exceeding great love wherewith, having loved Thine own in the world, Thou didst love them

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unto the end, my words are all coldness, all deadness, Thou Thyself canst, without words, speak to their hearts. They have given Thee all they can, all they have; there is not one power that they would keep back from Thee: there is nothing that they desire, save Thyself. But Thee,—for Thou hast given them the right,—they will have. Without Thee,—it is Thy HOLY SPIRIT that thus moves them,—they will not be contented. For Thee, O Pearl of Great Price, they have cast themselves into the sea of trouble and affliction, if so be they may attain Thee. For Thee, O Hidden Treasure, they have sold all that they had, to buy the field of Thy labour, where Thou art to be found. When they minister for Thy sake to the sick, remember how Thou didst not disdain, though it were contrary to the law, to put forth Thine own blessed hand, and to touch the leper. When they go forth, for Thy sake, into cottages, think Thou then of Thine own cottage at Nazareth: when they take up their cross for Thee, call to mind the heavy Cross which Thou didst bear up Mount Calvary for them. In all their affliction, vouchsafe to be afflicted: in all their trouble, let them feel Thee to be a very present help; they are Thine own: keep them so by Thine own dear Love; only be Thou near

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them, they will go through fire or water: only hold them up on the raging sea, they will come to Thee at once, across it. Call them into the battle, into pain, sorrow, temptation, affliction, here, if Thou wilt; only let it be hereafter, 'Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away!'"

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLII.

THE WITNESS AND HELP OF THE LORD.

"The word of the LORD *that came to Micah the Morasthite, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is. And let the* LORD GOD *be witness against you, the* LORD *from His holy temple. For behold, the* LORD *cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth."*—MICAH i. 1-4.

[THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1858.]*

You have heard the common saying about the Old Testament: "The Jews preserved it; Protestants read it; Catholics understand it." But, indeed, there is nothing more remarkable than the difference between the way in which it was read in primitive and mediæval times, and the manner in which it is studied now. Then they read it all equally—one book as much as another; one chapter of a book as much as another; now, we have favourite books and favourite chapters; we study them over and

* At the time of removal to a new house, in which two works, previously separated, were to be carried on together.

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over again; and, as for the rest, we either neglect it altogether, or just pick a chapter or a clause or a verse, here and there, forgetting that the HOLY GHOST spoke as much by what we omit as by what we read. The Fathers are very fond of comparing the Bible to a garden, full of different beds of flowers and plantations of fruit trees. If that be so, many and many a bed we never look at; many and many a flower we never pluck.

And of all the books we neglect, there are none which are more entirely passed by than the Minor Prophets. I have long been intending, my Sisters, to do what I could that we might know something more of these. And I have resolved, with GOD'S help, to take one of them, and to go regularly through it with you, as He shall give me power and ability. It may perhaps be that, if I can say anything that shall give you pleasure or bring you profit, I may afterwards make it a poor little offering to others. For this I would have you to remember: I am not speaking to you out of my own head. Many and many a Saint and Doctor of the Church has spent hours on hours of prayer and study and meditation on these very Prophets; and what they wrote and taught to their own congregations, what they preached to Religious Houses in the first fervours of their

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love, what they addressed to friends in days when "the word of the LORD was precious, there was no open vision:" that I may lay before you now. They could not have worked with a more earnest desire of doing good to those over whom they were set, than I would work for your benefit; and the words they then spoke may have power still, the HOLY GHOST helping them, to cheer, and comfort, and support you.

There was more than one reason why I should choose Micah; but one will be sufficient: namely that, excepting Isaiah and Hosea, he speaks more clearly of our LORD than do any of the other Prophets. Let us try then, in his words, everywhere to behold Him Who is chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; to see Him by faith, Whom one day we hope to see eye to eye, face to face: to see—nay, rather to touch and hold fast—Him by love, from Whom, one day, we trust never more to be separated by sin, by the body, by infirmity, by distance. And we shall have a glorious band of guides to help us. We shall have S. Jerome, who, writing from his cell at Bethlehem, seemed imbued with the doctrine of the Incarnation and Nativity; we shall have Theophylact, one of the latest Fathers of the Eastern Church; we shall have S. Thomas Aquinas, the deepest intellect which GOD ever

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raised up to do service to His Church; we shall have S. Bonaventura, who, for his love, was called the Seraphic Doctor; we shall have Rupert, the humble head of a little monastery near Cologne, who has over and over again spoken to you: who, if GOD spares me, will over and over again speak to you, in my words. Trusting to their teaching, then, or rather, trusting to the teaching of the HOLY GHOST by them, let us, like S. Peter, cast ourselves into this sea of prophecy, if, like him, we may but get to JESUS on the shore.

Now, the first thing to be noticed is, that the name of Micah signifies *humility;* and that he stands sixth in order of the Minor Prophets. Six, as you know, is the number which is an emblem of the Passion; because, on the sixth hour of the sixth day, our dear LORD was crucified for the life of the world. Therefore, even by his name and position, we may expect Micah to tell us of the humility of the Passion: that Passion which is to be all our salvation, and all our desire; that Passion, dearest Sisters, which must be your hope and your help, or your life is indeed of all lives most miserable. And it is Micah the Morasthite, from the town of Morasthi, in the tribe of Judah; and living in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, he was

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the contemporary of Isaiah and of Hosea. Hosea, as you may see by the beginning of his book, prophesied for Israel chiefly; Isaiah, for Judah entirely; Micah, as this verse tells us, spoke of both: of Samaria and of Jerusalem.

"Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is; and let the LORD GOD be witness against you, the LORD from His holy temple." Ah! dear Sisters! it matters not so much to you what that witness will be against others; but see what, weekly and daily, it might be against yourselves. How He first of all drew you on to love Him, to wish to be His entirely, to wish that no earthly cares, business, occupations, should ever be able to get between yourselves and Him Whom you love. How He has opened a way for you to that, making the crooked straight, and the rough places plain, giving you every possible means of grace, feeding you daily with Himself, abiding among you in His own dear Presence. How He has fenced in this His vineyard; how He has so often singularly protected and watched over you; and then, what has been your return? I am sometimes almost terrified when I think what He may expect. It is not as if you had done nothing; it is not as if you had not done much; but then, what amount of doing can be an equivalent for such

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an amount of grace? "Let the LORD GOD be witness against you." They are solemn words in themselves, and made more solemn by that which follows: "The LORD from His holy temple;" "which temple," as the Apostle says, "ye are." Against you, in whom He dwells by right of Baptism; against you, in whom He again and again tabernacles by right of Holy Communion; against you, in whom He reigns without any sharer of His kingdom or palace, by right of your own vow,—this witness is to be borne.

Dearest Sisters, do not deceive yourselves in making your estimate of what it is! of what those ten thousand talents really mean! And GOD grant that, so far as it is in my power, I may never allow you to make such a mistake; that I may never, seeing the hundred measures of wheat, desire you to sit down quickly and write fourscore!

Well, but then here is our comfort: "For behold, the LORD cometh forth out of His place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth." "The LORD cometh forth out of His place;" not again now, as it was to be when Micah wrote, by the mystery of the Incarnation; but again and again in that most dear, most humble journey of the

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Blessed Eucharist. "He shall come down,"—down indeed, from the Right Hand of the FATHER to the womb of the Virgin; down indeed, from "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things," to "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?" Down indeed, from that blessed and adoring company, to be the friend of publicans and sinners. "And shall tread upon the high places of the earth." So indeed He did. He trod on the summit of that Galilæan mountain, when He continued all night in prayer to GOD, and then chose the Twelve, whose sound was to go out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. He trod on the height of Tabor; and then, by His own Transfiguration, He gave us some faint idea of the glory of the Blessed. He trod on the Mount of Olives, when He beheld the city, and wept over it. He trod on the height of Calvary, when He there set up the standard of His Cross to be the mark of our faith, the goal of our hope, the home of our love, the trophy of His everlasting victory. It is well said then, "The LORD will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth;" there bestowing every kind of grace, there giving all hope of glory; until at length, finally, He once more trod on the height

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of the Mount of Olives, when, as He was blessing His disciples, He was taken up into Heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. So then, if we have such witness to be borne against us, we have such help to be afforded within us; and I might well say that if the former verse has the terror, the latter brings the comfort. Then it follows: "And the mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place." And there, dear Sisters, you have the end and aim of His coming; the end and aim of your lives. "The mountains shall be molten under Him." Oh happy coming, which is thus to remove difficulties! which is thus to sweep away those trials and troubles and hindrances which tower up between us and our heavenly home! We, every hour of our lives, brought into contact with difficulties; we who, as long as ever GOD shall be pleased to spare us, must have to contend with them; we, of all persons, ought to take comfort in this:—how they beset Him on every side, and how gloriously He overcame them! "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." And so here. "The mountains shall be molten under Him;" not under *us*—not by anything

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we can do, but only and simply because He is with us; because He is fighting on our side; because He is pledged that we shall be more than conquerors in His love. O dear Sisters! it is hard sometimes not to be discouraged, when we see such obstacles spring up in our way—within us, in our Christian life, and also in our common work and our common enemies. Never mind. If we will not believe the Prophet, let us hear the Apostle: "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." And how? Micah goes on to tell us. "As wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place." By love, that is, or by force: the fire of love, to melt cold, hard, stubborn hearts; the torrent of irresistible force, which sweeps away everything before it, like a cataract or an avalanche.

Our difficulties, dearest Sisters, are always altering, will always alter, their kind and their appearance. You know how that old hymn tells you

> "To think that each new week will yield
> New struggles in new battle-field."

This week has its own peculiar ones also. It is so difficult, in the midst of earthly changes and chances, of removal from one house to another, of giving up the place where we have

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worshipped GOD so long, and not as yet being able to prepare a new resting-place for Him,—it is so difficult for you to keep close to Him, to avoid all distractions, always to be diligent and earnest in prayer; always, when opposed and vexed, to keep your temper. But in these times of confusion and unsettledness, there can be no better remedy than to think of our dear LORD Himself: how He lived a life of constant turmoil and confusion; how "there were many coming and going, so that they could not so much as eat bread;" how the disciples could say: "Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?" So, my Sisters, even in the midst of worldly occupation and worldly bustle, this you must endeavour to do: to remember that, in removing furniture, or arranging rooms, in settling with workmen, in paying debts, you are as much that dear LORD's as you were in the quiet shrine of that Oratory where we shall never pray again. These confusions may lose you time, but do not let them lose you earnestness—do not let them lose you love! Even by things such as these that dear LORD can draw you nearer to Himself; just as He touched the heart of the Samaritan woman, when she was occupied with her household affairs, and drawing water in the

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heat of the day. Let it all be sanctified by prayer, whatever you have to do. If not by a long set form of prayer, let one little loving thought, let one little earnest sentence go up from earth to Heaven, from the turmoil of this world to the peace of that, from the bride to the Bridegroom. And He, my own Sisters, hear and bless you in your preparation for your new house now, and hereafter give you the House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens!

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLIII.

HIGH PLACES.

"*For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?*" etc.—MICAH i. 5-8.

[FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1858.]

IN the first verses of this chapter Micah tells us of overflowing and abounding grace; of mountains of difficulties swept away before our dear LORD; of His Love that melts all things; of his Power, to which every enemy must bow. And now, dear Sisters, listen to the reason of all this mercy: a marvellous reason indeed, as befits the GOD that doeth wonders. "The valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place." "For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel." I have often told you that GOD's *therefores* are not man's: and here indeed we have an example that they are not. And look into your own

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hearts, my Sisters, and see if you do not find the same thing there; if, notwithstanding so much past neglect, so little love, Sacraments so little profited by, prayers so coldly said, that dear LORD does not, as it were, increase those means of grace, add to your opportunities, go on to make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. You know how often, how sadly, you all do grieve that Blessed SPIRIT, whose temples you are. You know how frequently, how coldly, you turn away from that dear LORD, whose brides you are; and yet, has He forsaken you? Has He not, over and over again, given you a fresh example of His love and care? [How differently we should all feel this Sunday, if, as we once feared, you had been obliged to remove to a distance from your old habitation, where you could not so often have had a Priest to offer up your prayers! You on the one side, I on the other, have indeed cause to see GOD'S goodness in this: you have failed often in not making all the use you could of the ministrations of your Priest; he has failed often in not exerting himself sufficiently for your good. And GOD might justly have punished us by rendering those ministrations for the future more difficult, and obliging them to be more infrequent. It is not so; the One True Priest has had compassion on our infirmities: the

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Spotless Lamb has manifested His loving gentleness to you. This is our LORD's return for our ingratitude.]

And now, for you, that is a solemn clause which follows: "What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?" Jerusalem, the city of the Temple: Samaria, the city of the Prophets: and therefore the greatest offence of all the Holy Land, because, with most privileges, they ought to have been most full of good works. Apply that to yourselves, dearest Sisters. We know this: that if you are not acting up to your profession, if you you are not walking worthily of the dignity of brides of CHRIST, then—the Prophet tells us so here—then, —it is enough to make us all tremble,—then, of all who call down GOD's anger in this town, you stand first and foremost. "What are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?" And do not think that this is my own interpretation: do not blame it as far-fetched. Many and many a Religious House has, before now, been warned from it; that, if not standing in the gap, and turning away GOD's anger from those that dwell around it in wickedness and misery, it is actually inviting, wooing, attracting that anger; because, of all sinners, the "sinners

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in Sion" are most hateful to Him. I do not say this of you, as if I thought it; as if I even feared it. But you ought to dread one idle word, one unbridled thought, one unhallowed action, when you know what you are vowed to, and how your plighted troth should never be absent from your memory. And remember this: all new situations, even if they are changes for the better, even if the blessing of GOD be manifestly with them, must have their own trials and their own temptations. You, dear Sisters, brought together as you now are, all under the same roof—necessarily and unavoidably seeing more of, knowing more about, each other—you must and will and do find all this a source of new temptations, which did not assail you when you were separate. I trust and pray that your thus coming together into a common Oratory and to common prayers, may be for the better, and not for the worse. But it will not be so, unless you, each of you, on the one side and on the other, pray earnestly to your common LORD, and strive earnestly with your own common corrupt natures. Else there will be jealousy and suspicion and unkindness springing up, and those hearts, which ought to be gardens, where the great and true Gardener may rejoice to see the flowers of His own grace, will grieve Him by earing weeds

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among those flowers, wild grapes instead of true grapes, tares mingled among wheat. But now, at the very beginning, try that this may not be so; just as now, at the very beginning, I have spoken to you about your danger, while yet it is only danger and nothing further; while yet I have not a shadow of complaint or sorrow. Now therefore it is, that I say to you what our LORD said to the disciples, and in them to all, "Watch."

But take that last clause, for it will bear it, in another sense. "What are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?" For see what a high place is. A place of defence; a place to which we look up: a place to which our different paths ascend. And if all the whole Church of our LORD is His true Israel, then, most surely, those that have undertaken the Religious Life are His Judah. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah." Well then, dearest Sisters! what are the high places of *this* Judah? Is it not that Vision of Peace —dim and indistinct as yet, but oh, how beautiful still!—that Vision of Peace, which the Prince of Peace, by such fearful wars, purchased for us? that Vision of Peace into which so many of His

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faithful servants have long since entered—which so many of your true-hearted Sisters already enjoy? It is indeed. Oh how often one looks away from all the dimness, and perplexities, and turmoil of this life, to the clearness, and stillness, and peace of that! The shades that there will be rolled away, the riddles that there will be interpreted, the struggles that there will be ended—oh how we shall look back upon them then, as enhancing that perfect blessedness, as giving a zest to that entire Peace! "What are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?"

But it was not so with Samaria; and see her punishment. "Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." Dearest Sisters! in every Religious House that judgment on the unfruitful vineyard ought to be as a household word: "I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." And here you have that same judgment repeated. How could we, any of us, bear to think of GOD's judgment thus resting here? Ourselves scattered, our services over, our Sacraments at an end; briars and

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thorns instead of the garden of the LORD: and that terrible threat—terrible, as the event shewed—made good: "And I will discover the foundations thereof." So to be discovered as to shew their worthlessness; so discovered as to prove that everything that had leant upon them was a sham and a deceit. For, in another sense, my Sisters, your foundations will one day most certainly be discovered. Likely enough, more than once, but once, certainly; namely, in the hour of death. I cannot tell what trials,—they may be fearful trials,—GOD has in store for you. Those who are making the profession of serving Him that you are making, are not likely to pass through this life without such proofs of your reality and your love. Something of them you have already known; and, thank GOD, you have not been found wanting. Whether in yourselves or externally, whether individually or together, how can I tell of what kind the proof will be? But remember, also, how the precious Corner Stone, how the true, the only, Foundation Stone, was tried; think of the bitter biting blows to which He was subject,—and you will not think much of yourselves. O happy trial or pain, whatever it may be, that shews you to be founded on Him! O happy tempest, from whatever quarter the wind may blow, that proves your faith to be

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anchored in His wounded Side! "I will discover her foundations." It may be a word of love; and then you know S. Peter's exhortation: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, but rejoice."

It follows: "And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate; for she gathered it for the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot. Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls." It is no ill consequence, dearest Sisters, of going straight through any book of Holy Scripture, that it binds us to GOD'S course, and not to our own. I might have rather dwelt, had I been left to myself, on the happy peace after a well-fought war, on the blessed return after a well-endured exile, on the brilliancy and everlasting beauty of that gold which, in the furnace of affliction, has been separated from the dross of earth, and is now a meet offering for the King of kings. But the Prophet, you see, speaks of Samaria's trial rather than of Judah's; of the affliction that was to death, not of the tribulation that led on to life; and, in it, of that greatest of curses: "She gathered it of the hire of an

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harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot." And if the faithlessness of ordinary Christians is thus characterised, is thus punished, what would be the fearful guilt, dearest Sisters, what the horrible punishment, if any of you should prove untrue to your plighted troth? if any of you, after having been—in the dearest and closest sense—called by the Name of CHRIST, should ever return to the world! Texts like these, my Sisters, force us to remember—I will not say the danger, but, at all events, the possibility. You never can tell what plausible arguments Satan may be allowed to bring forward to allure you; what threats he may be permitted to wield, that he may terrify you. Even now, he may be pleading against any one of you, as against Job in old time, that you may be left to his malice, that he may have you, and sift you as wheat. Not that that loving Bridegroom would forsake you, not that His gentle, tender arm would really be withdrawn from you: but only that in the mean time you cannot tell how much you may be called to endure, how hard it may be to hold out.

Well, dear Sisters, all your life is one long holding out. The Prophets give you no other lesson than the Gospels: "Ye must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of GOD." Only, dear Sisters, bear in mind, without

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one moment's forgetfulness, what a race this is in which *you* run. Fix your eyes on the crown for which *you* strive; and GOD give you grace to run that race more earnestly, to be earning that crown more patiently, than ever before.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

(This Series of Sermons on Micah was not completed: the two following, on the same prophet, are unconnected with it.)

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SERMON XLIV.

THE TOWER OF THE FLOCK.

"*And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Sion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Now, why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.*"—MICAH iv. 8, 9.

[1859.]

I doubt if any verse in the Minor Prophets applies more emphatically to such a House as this than those I have just read. And the more one looks at the fulness of their meaning, the more one is astonished that so few words can contain so much.

"And thou, O tower of the flock." You hear of it in another part of Holy Scripture, under the same name too in the Hebrew, though it be translated differently. "Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar." The tower, that is, whence shepherds, well armed, watched the flocks as they grazed over the measureless prairie land, in order to have the further

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and clearer view of the incursions of Edomites or Arabians or other marauders. You know how the Chaldæans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels of Job, while the Sabæans drove off his sheep and oxen. Good need, then, of such a tower, whence the incursions of the enemy might soonest be discovered, and round the foot of which, in time of extreme danger, the flocks might be driven, and defended by the bowmen in the upper stories. Therefore also it is written in Isaiah, that the LORD of the vineyard, when He had done all other things for it, also built a tower within it.

Need I tell you, my Sisters, what is the Tower of the flock?—of that beautiful flock, part of which still follows its Shepherd through the wildernesses of this world; but part, the larger and the happier, feeds on the celestial mountains,—there is led among green pastures, there lies down by the side of still waters? The tower of the flock, and the tower of the glory of that flock, of the Lamb That is without spot or blemish—the Immaculate Lamb; the tower of the Good Shepherd, that layeth down His life for the sheep; yes, and the tower of the King of kings—of the King that goeth forth conquering and to conquer. That Tower was reared up, as the Prophet speaks, in the cloudy and

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dark day, when the sheep were scattered upon the mountain: and from that time to this, it has been their one sure hiding-place, from storm alike, and from foes: in the bitter nipping frost, and in the scorching overwhelming heat. Your Tower, also, my Sisters: of the strength whereof you know something already, and have much, much more, to learn; a tower always so nigh, a tower so easily accessible to you, so absolutely impregnable by your enemies.

O glorious Tower of the Cross! How many weak trembling souls have in their several generations there taken refuge! It is this of which the LORD speaks: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee." How many valiant servants of the Captain of our salvation, pressed to the last gasp by their enemies, driven like chaff before the wind by the prince of the powers of the air, overwhelmed by floods of temptations, swept off their feet by many a raging billow of doubts, have clung to this Tower, and thence received strength; and, out of weakness being made strong, forced to flight the armies of the aliens. The Tower of the flock. Yes, poor lambs of the Good Shepherd, be of courage still! From that Tower His own precious seven words, as it were still echo—addressed

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to you now, as once to the bystanders on Calvary. In that Tower your only food is provided: stored up for you in endless abundance: renewed every morning; never failing,—the fresh manna of the Kingdom of Heaven. Wherein-soever you have sinned, go there to have it pardoned; whatever you have suffered, go there to forget it; whatever you have been successful in, go there to give thanks for it. Tower of the flock, Tower of each lamb of the flock, safeguard and fortress of each virgin soul, against whom the enemy will be as sure to direct the mightiest and most harassing of his weapons, as the LORD of that Tower is sure to acknowledge them as nearest and dearest in His love!

A certain Patriarch of old left this Tower: "Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar;" and what followed? It continues directly: "And it came to pass, while he was in that land"—that land, not blest by its protection—that Reuben committed the great sin which deprived him of the birthright and the blessing. No safety but by the Cross.

It goes on: "The stronghold of the daughter of Sion." For if not this, what has the Church militant, in which she may trust? O how often the best of her children disappoint her! O how often even her Saints fail her! But this,

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never. "I am accustomed to wonder," says S. Bernard, "whether there be more strength or more love in the Tree of the Cross. Surely, both infinite; but, all being infinite, not therefore equal. Every drop of blood thence pouring down, a little globe of perfect love; every moment in which the Lord of glory there hung, an infinity of love: the Eyes, beaming love on the ransomed world; the Crown, a royal diadem of affection; the stretched-out Arms, yearning to embrace all pardoned sinners; the Head, bowed down to give the kiss of peace to happy penitents; the Heart, made an access to by the spear the great, strong Rock rent by love. But, if I speak of strength, what deeds of valour did that same Tree put forth? O victories of all Martyrs, O patient endurance of all Confessors, O marvellous courage and self-renunciation of all Virgins,—hence, and from no other fountain, ye gushed forth! Thou, Thyself the Source of both, Thyself Love, Thyself Strength, Thou must teach me, when one of these deeps calleth to the other, whether of the twain crieth with the louder voice. I know not: but this only I know, that I give myself to be swallowed up of that Love, to be overwhelmed of that Strength." It is well said, then: "The stronghold of the daughter of Sion."

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But, now, what is this that follows: "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." What first dominion? And we may take it in many senses. In that first Paradise of Eden, the tree of life stood in the midst of the garden. But it lost its dominion. "*Lest*" the man "put forth his hand, and eat, and live for ever; *therefore* the LORD GOD sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." Then it stood, that tree of life, on the summit of Mount Calvary: no longer as the tree of dominion, no longer as the sheaf to which the other sheaves bowed down, but the mark of all ignominy, the aim of all ridicule, the resting-place of all hatred. Nevertheless: "Unto thee *shall* it come, the first dominion." For, in the heavenly and everlasting Paradise, that Paradise of which Eden was a poor weak type, the Tree of Life shall again stand in the midst. The days of its dishonour shall have passed away; and the prophecy shall be fulfilled: "For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land shall they possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them."

But take it in another sense. "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." You

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must all have felt, and more than once or twice, dearest Sisters, that which all Christians worthy of the name have felt at times, (and they who keep closest to their LORD most of all),—that sense of having gone back, of wanting the glow and fervour of first love, of doing out of routine that which was once done out of eagerness and zeal,—which is so very hard and discouraging to bear. That was the first dominion of the Cross. You know how often it is: "Why cannot I now have that love which I once felt in receiving the Body and Blood of my LORD? Why do I feel so cold, when kneeling in His Presence? Where is all that fervour and glow which I once used to have? What has become of that resolution which used to make it seem easy to do or to bear anything and everything for Him? Now all is cold, and lifeless, and dark: now it is all so commonplace and sad. I hear the same things, and they make no impression on me. I see that same Blessed LORD in His Sacramental humility, the Body broken for me, the Blood shed for me, and it all seems nothing." Well, my Sisters, it is no uncommon complaint; it must and will be so; it has been so with the greatest of Saints: those seasons of depression and coldness form almost the staple of their letters. But, still, be of good courage. The

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dear LORD Who loves you is only compelling you to go on awhile without Him, as He made the disciples in the storm; He is only saying, as He once did to the band of His Apostles, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away." All that first love will come back again when He sees good; here you have the promise: "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion;" only "tarry thou the LORD's leisure; be strong, and He shall comfort thy heart." My Sisters, this is the great trial of a Sister's life. Sometimes it will happen from your own fault, entirely or partially; but sometimes, mind you, without the least sin on your side; even as it was from no fault of the Apostles, that we know of, that they were sent by themselves to the sea of Tiberias. And Isaiah tells us what to do then: "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the LORD, and stay upon his GOD." And of human means, you know that Confession is the best remedy for such a state of listlessness and coldness; partly, no doubt, because it is (so to speak) the natural effect of that Sacrament; partly, because it is the honour put by GOD on His own remedy. And after all,

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dearest Sisters, it is not your cause which is at stake, so much as that of the Cross. "Unto thee shall it come;" to thee, O glorious and beautiful Tree—Tree of all salvation, Tree of all hope! To thee, resting-place of the dying GOD, safe harbour, peaceful fort of His troubled people! To thee, hallowed by the King's Blood; to thee, consecrated by the tears of the GOD of all consolation! To thee, refuge of penitents, home of Saints; to thee it shall come, "even the first dominion!" When you are thus discouraged, feel thus cold-hearted, look at your crosses, my Sisters. "It is to them, not to me, that this despite is really done," say: "and the LORD of the Cross will not permit the servants of the Cross to seek for its comfort in vain."

But when? That is one of the secret things which belong to the LORD our GOD; but there *is* a *when*, which belongs to us also. "The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Here we have the old contrast of Sion and Jerusalem, again. We have heard of the stronghold of the former; now we have the kingdom of the latter. Yes: there can be no coldness there! No winter to the soul, any more than to the body, there: No cloud and mist there, where the Sun of Righteousness is in all His brightness and in all His heat. No

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more of those sudden chills there, like a day of bitter east wind in spring: those chills, those darknesses, which, for a while, shut out GOD from us. No, never, thank God, never! The daughter of Sion will there be merged in the daughter of Jerusalem; the first dominion—or rather, infinitely, infinitely more than the first dominion—will belong to her for ever.

See: I have spoken so much of the former half of the text, that I must leave the latter for another time. Only remember that this blessed Sacrament *is* the dominion of the daughter of Sion: is that which gives her vigour, gives her beauty; quickens her hope, increases her faith, inflames her love. Come to it, my Sisters, as those who know that with whatever changes and variations, whatever flickerings and uncertainties of love here, the day shall come when the former dominion shall be restored: when not only the first, but full, complete, perfect love shall be yours for ever!

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLV.

PERSEVERANCE TO THE END.

"*And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation: and the* LORD *shall reign over them in Mount Sion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong-hold of the daughter of Sion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.*"—MICAH iv. 7, 8, 9.

[1857.]

AT the very first sight, you can apply the first two clauses to yourselves: "I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that is cast far off a strong nation." And which of you is there to whom that description does not apply? What are all the records of Christian life but such a painful progress, as may well be called halting? You know how, with great effort, and not without much prayer, you gain some step: the gain, certain, but not made without pain as well as

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trouble,—and slow as well as painful. "As a prince," said the Angel of the Great Covenant to Jacob, "hast thou power with GOD and with man, and hast prevailed:" and yet, just after that, "he halted upon his thigh." As surely, you know it very well, as the very law and essence of your real inner life is advance, so it is painful advance. It is not as if sometimes you were reminded of the weakness and infirmity of your nature, and then again had a season in which everything went on smoothly and easily. That you never expect, in this world: "then shall the lame man leap as an hart," can only be true in the next: the impotent man that was daily laid for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, entered into that temple at the very moment when he was set free from his infirmity for ever.

Then, what is the promise? "I will make her that halted a remnant." Out of the many that seemed to run well, that did run well for a season, only a few persevering to the end!—and the poor weak trembling one, whose whole life was one long fear that she should never reach that happy goal at all,—she, all her fears ended, she, all her tears wiped away, she, all her difficulties conquered, she, taken into the joy of the LORD! Let this little Oratory dearest Sisters,

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witness, if it will, how often and how sadly you all halt: but then it also witnesses how often you receive the medicine that will nevertheless give you strength to persevere, through pain and through infirmity, till, weary and halting though they were, "Our feet *shall* stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

"And her that was cast far off a strong nation." And does not that recall to us the promise regarding the Bride, that she was to be terrible as an army with banners? Cast off —and how? Cast off really once, before ever the HOLY GHOST first descended on you in the waters of Baptism. But *seeming* to be cast off again and again since; seeming to be left to yourselves; seeming to walk in darkness, and to have no light; seeming to be left a prey to your enemies. "I sought Him, but I found Him not." And out of this weakness, see what strength! Every power, then, every faculty, strengthened with GOD'S might,—banded together as it were in an host to do Him service—a nation, not a single person: her that was cast far off, a strong nation.

Never such a glorious promise, unless some glorious means of its attainment. And so we have it in the next verse: "And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Sion, unto

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thee shall it come, even the first dominion." Now we are to remember that this tower of the flock, or tower of Edar, concerning which you read in the book of Genesis that "Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar," stood close to the place where the Angels appeared to the shepherds on that first Christmas night: its grey old stones were then lighted up by that brightness,—its walls echoed to that first carol, "Glory to GOD in the Highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." And since then, not it, but the Incarnation itself, has been the One Tower of the true flock; here we have our strength and defence, as well as our comfort and joy. Dear Sisters, I know of no other Tower but this, that can be your refuge, when you are called to any more than usual effort, to any more than usual self-denial. If your thoughts did not go back to all that He, Who took our flesh near the tower of Edar, suffered in the flesh He had taken, you, of all persons, would be the most miserable. How could I dare to speak to you as I do,—how could I venture to tell you of the necessary sorrow and difficulty that your life involves, unless the LORD Whom you love had walked in the same way, leaving the prints of His Feet in its roughest places, leaving also the traces of His

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glory to those that should 'come after Him? And see how beautifully the two clauses are to be taken together. Often and often I shewed you, in the Book of Canticles, how all things that the Bridegroom has, are the Bride's also; how it is her garden as well as His, in which He walks; how it is her land as well as His, into which she is called: "the voice of the turtle is heard in *our* land." So here. "Unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." That is, the dominion which the Word had over all from the beginning, by right of creation, but of which for awhile He was deprived by the malice of Satan, shall yet once more return to Him, and return for ever: "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His Feet." But yet, in the very same verse, the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. If He triumphs, she shall be crowned too; if He sees the end of all his wars, not less for her is the vision of everlasting peace.

Dear Sisters, will He be content to have finished His warfare, but to leave you for ever in yours? to have assumed the diadem of gold, and to leave you the crown of thorns? Your own hearts tell you, No, not less plainly than His express words: "That where I am, there ye may be also." Yes: the kingdom shall come

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to you; and what kingdom is that? In the first place, one that is small indeed, but very dear to Him, one, every nook and corner of which He will have for His own: the little kingdom of your selves. And this kingdom, mind, can only be yours, when it is His. It is not yours while you kneel here and say, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." It never can be fully yours in this world, because never, till this world is past, will the warfare against self be accomplished. But, dearest Sisters, remember that this kingdom is His by a more especial claim. You have made it over to Him entirely; and, if you would, you could not,—and GOD be thanked, if you could, I know that you would not,—resume the gift. And what a day that will be, when the kingdom shall come wholly to you! when there will not be those divided affections;—such a strong and holy desire this way,—such a strong and evil temptation the other way! Those desks o yours could tell something of the struggles you have to keep possession of that kingdom at all but nothing made with hands, nothing earthly, will ever see the blessedness of the day when that kingdom shall be wholly given, because it is wholly your LORD'S.

Or, if you like to take it in the other sense,

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"the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem,"—that happy kingdom of perpetual peace; that city in which are the many mansions; that land where the voice of the everlasting Turtle is heard. Ah! if you only think of that kingdom, you will not wonder that the prophet should go on as he does: "Now, why dost thou cry out aloud?" What! are all these things too much to endure for His sake Who is chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely? What! is not His own way to be fulfilled? "Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" "The disciple is not above his Master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master."

But take the question rightly. Every reason why you should cry out, in one sense. Every reason why you should call on your dear LORD and King by every promise He has given you by every hope He has infused into you, by every example He has set you, now, continually, unceasingly, to come to your assistance. Every need that you should cry out, when you see how much you fall, when you reckon up so many sad sins of omission and commission, when you know that in you, that is, in your flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

Cry to Him, dear Sisters, it cannot be too

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often; make your sorrows known to Him, it cannot be too earnestly. But not in discontent —not in distrust—not in fear. You have the question at once: "Is there no King in thee? Is thy Counsellor perished?"

"Is there no King in thee?" You know better. You have invited this dear and gentle King to take up His abode with you: you have dedicated, as it were, a temple to Him: you have pledged yourselves to be His; and, according to His own most gracious words, He is come into His garden. You know what kind of King He is. How, when on earth, He chose a crown of thorns, and a sceptre of reproach: how, when on earth, He had not where to lay His Head: how He had poor ignorant men for His courtiers, poor, despised cottages for His resting-places. Dearest Sisters, all outward contempt, all outward sufferings, these are your crown of thorns still; these are the ornament of grace which He has promised you. That verse applies emphatically to you: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of CHRIST, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Indeed it is no small privilege, not only to be made like Him by suffering, but to be made like Him by the kind of suffering. You know that you can now far better enter into those

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labours of His—His weariness in going about doing good, His lodging among the poor, His being housed in miserable cottages, with all their inconvenience, coarseness, sufferings—than you could before you entered on this life. Your King is indeed with you, then, when He sees you doing for Him among his poor here the very same which, eighteen hundred long years ago, He and His disciples did in the plains of Galilee, or in the hill country of Judæa.

And again: "Is not thy King in thee?" That humble King, Who was thus once crowned, thus once lodged,—though He being raised from the dead, dieth no more, though now His mansion is that glorious and eternal Temple,—still, that He may shew forth no less His love than His humility,—still, that He may be the King in and among you, His dear and elect ones,—once more, and again and again, He lays aside His Majesty, veils Himself under the forms of Bread and Wine, and so enters into the closest of all unions with you. Is there no King among you, morning by morning, dear Sisters, as you kneel here? Is there no King Whose tenderness and strength lead you on through the day, keeping you His, hallowing your actions, comforting you, correcting you, supporting you?

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And lastly: "Is thy Counsellor perished?" Now see with what admirable force that expression applies to you. Not only that this dear LORD, Who is the Mighty GOD, the Prince of Peace, the Wonderful, is also the Counsellor: the Counsellor to all; but for another reason yet. You have chosen, my own Sisters,—and GOD be blessed for it,—you have chosen the path which He does not command to all, but which He counsels to some. All are commanded to offer Him the gold of love, the myrrh of repentance, the frankincense of hope; all are commanded to bring Him some fruit of good works, some flowers of a holy life. All must be ready in thought and will, though not in action, to offer Him the rose of martyrdom and self-denial: all are not bound to, all cannot, make oblation to Him of the lily of chastity. Here He was your Counsellor indeed; the Counsellor of so many generations of your happy and perfected Sisters: who knew no love but His here, and who now so know His love as others know it not even there!

"Is thy Counsellor perished?" And let David answer: "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

Yes: so is the glorious end. Poor trembling one, she may have halted here in the way which

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her Beloved trod, here she may have seemed neglected, here cast out; but even here the Tower of the flock, of that beautiful flock, was her defence; even here she had her King, even here her Counsellor; and now that dear King has taken her home to Himself, that all-wise Counsellor has given her an inheritance among the hundred and forty and four thousand, and a portion in the New Song of Virgin souls.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLVI.

THOUGH HE SLAY ME, YET WILL I TRUST IN HIM.

"*Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the* LORD, *I will joy in the* GOD *of my salvation.*"—HABAK. iii. 17, 18.

[FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. 1857.]

THIS song of Habakkuk has well been said in the Church on Fridays, as we say it now, for fifteen hundred years. For it is a glorious prophecy of the Passion of our dear LORD and Master, from one end of it to the other. "He had horns coming out of His Hand: and there was the hiding of His Power:" what is this but the victory which His own Right Hand and His Holy Arm won for Him, when it was fastened by the heavy nail to the Cross! "He stood and measured the earth; He beheld and drove asunder the nations." Of what does that tell, but of the watch-tower of the Cross, whence

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He, the True Prophet, as well as the only High Priest, cast His glance over the whole world, seeing who they would be in all its generations that would lay hold of His salvation, who they would be that would reject it: the final salvation of the righteous that would be wrought by His Blood,—the final damnation of the wicked that would be accomplished by their setting it at nought? "The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation." Have we not there the darkness that was over all the land until the ninth hour, while the LORD and Source of Life hung in His Agony on the Cross? And if the Master thus suffered, this good and faithful prophet knew well that the servants must suffer too: that they must not expect, ought not to wish, to be above their LORD. Hence the verses I have read you just now: like a heavy storm-cloud,—but it passes, and a bright gleam of light ends the prophecy.

Now, dearest Sisters, though, doubtless, in the first and lowest sense, Habakkuk is here speaking of temporal losses, it is not in that sense which I would take the verses in speaking to you. It would be too late now to comfort you against earthly hardships, dangers, contempt, unkindness, suffering. You have cast in your lot with the Man of Sorrows: you looked for sorrow and trouble,

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and you have found it. He told you that the path would be rough; you know it is. He told you that the end would be glorious; you expect to find it so. No: in speaking to Sisters, it is o worse suffering than any exterior trials that this verse would teach us to speak. It is of that trial which all those who have desired most entirely and most earnestly to serve GOD have suffered from the most: that feeling of coldness, dryness, deadness, listlessness, in all our prayers, in every thought of our LORD, as if we neither loved Him, nor had the power to love Him: as if we neither could come near to Him, nor had the desire to come near to Him: as if we could not find Him, because we would not seek Him. Now, my dear Sisters, if the walls of every confessional in every Religious House in the world could tell us what was the most frequent complaint they heard from the most earnest souls that enter into them, I am well persuaded that it would be this: "I cannot love; I cannot pray; I have no energy in GOD's service; my heart is so cold; my prayers are so dull and listless and formal." Let us see then what Habakkuk has to tell us of the matter.

"Although the fig-tree shall not blossom." When, and why did it blossom? at the very conclusion of winter: the sign that his reign

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was just at an end, and that summer was now nigh at hand. It was, so to speak, the snowdrop of those countries. And what does that mean for you? What but this? That, as yet, all this world appears so cold and so winterly: as yet, you have no foretaste of the eternal summer which is bright with an uncreated sun: no poor little earnest of it even; nothing that can lead your thoughts to it: no distant sight of the everlasting hills, those hills whence your help cometh. Our LORD says, "Again, a little while, and ye shall see Me;" and you are ready to cry, with S. Bonaventura, "O LORD JESUS, what a long little while this is!" Let it be so; as S. Bernard says: "Let us bravely resolve to travel along in wintry ways here, in frost and darkness and fatigue, because we know that that eternal Sun very seldom vouchsafes to shine amidst the thick mists and fogs of this world. But He is there, in our Country, nevertheless: the flowers of that land are in full blossom, though we see nothing but barrenness in this: the Turtle in those fields causes His Voice to be perpetually heard, though we can so seldom hear His note here; the sunshine and serene weather of those skies is unchangeable, though cloud succeeds cloud, and fog presses on fog in these. Walk more

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earnestly by faith: see with the mind, not with the body: entreat, by your prayers, that blessing of which Thomas fell short, when it was said to him, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'"

"Neither shall fruit be in the vines." And of this, dearest Sisters, I think you all know something also. That Vine, that true Vine, in Whom you must abide, if you would bring forth good works, how often It seems to have no fruit for you. You go through the Stations, you say the Litanies or the Hours, of the Passion; you try, perhaps, to meditate on it; you endeavour, as hunted doves, to take refuge in that Rock: you desire, as loving followers, to sit down under the shadow of that Tree with great delight; and you cannot. The thoughts will not come, the words are spoken without meaning, the petitions go up without heart. He could suffer all that for you, but you can suffer nothing with Him: you can behold the Arms stretched out on the Cross, to invite and embrace the whole world: can see them, but cannot say, "His left Hand should be under my head, and His right Hand should embrace me:" can see the Crown of Thorns set upon His Head, but cannot realize the crown of glory it purchased for you: can see the Head bowed in death upon the Cross, but

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cannot pray, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for Thy love is better than wine." It is sad, I know, but this is your comfort: that the multitudes of those who loved Him most, and served Him most faithfully on earth, and now walk most gloriously in the light of His countenance in Heaven, have, in the time of their pilgrimage here, uttered the same complaint: that they could not enter into the Sanctuary of His Passion, that they could not feel themselves set as a seal on His Heart, a seal on His Arm.

It goes on: "The labour of the olive shall fail." Now, notice, it does not say, the *olive* shall fail. For what is this olive, but the continual supply of the HOLY GHOST, which never fails, which is shed forth abundantly, which is renewed day by day? But, the labour of the olive: that is, its sensible effects, its power of resisting temptation, its power of overthrowing self-will, its power of beating down Satan. Although it comes, yet we do not conquer by it: although in a thousand different ways it is given us, yet, so far as outward appearances go, we might almost be as well without it. I think we all know what that means; but, dearest Sisters, I know it more than you do. You can know it only in yourselves; but a Priest must know and

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see it in others also. And that is, perhaps, the sharpest pain, the worst discouragement of all: to see this labour of the olive fail in others. In ourselves, we know, as sure as GOD is true, that if we pray earnestly enough, and long enough, we shall be heard. But for others we have no such assurance. Even of the effectual fervent prayer of a Saint, (how much more of ourselves!) it is only said that it availeth *much*. There is but one Intercessor, the Saint of Saints and the Martyr of Martyrs, with Whom to ask is, infallibly, to receive: with Whom to desire is, infallibly, to have:—He Who breathed forth the prayer most difficult to answer that was ever uttered, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and lo! before the end of the day it had brought in two at least to that forgiveness. O dearest Sisters, Habakkuk, who was no priest, that we know of, had more faith, had more hope, than we have now. Could I see the labour of the olive fail in any of you, and yet go on directly, "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation?" I fear not.

"And the fields shall yield no meat." There is but one meat that any of us can for a moment here think of, as the support of a Christian life: "So man did eat Angels' food, for He sent

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them meat enough." The question is, why is it here spoken of as coming from the *fields* rather than from Heaven, or even from the vine? And they give many reasons, of which these seem the best. What less likely to yield sustenance than the mere untilled, uncultivated fields, with their berries and fruit, that are not only not nutritious, but often poisonous? We should look for meat in granaries, in corn-lands, in barns, not in the bare and open fields. And so what less likely to support the inner life that we lead with GOD, that life which is hid with CHRIST in Him, than Bread and Wine? We know that in those early ages, when the Church was in that frightful and lengthened conflict with the world, when the blood of the Saints was shed like water on every side of Jerusalem, when the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the LORD, and against His Anointed, then the Martyrs proclaimed with one heart and with one voice the Passion and Death of the SON of GOD,—they gloried in their worship of the Crucified One; they set forth everywhere the Cross, counting its shame for their highest honour. But of the Blessed Sacrament they never would speak: they knew how impossible it would seem to the heathen, how many blasphemies

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would be uttered against it, how many insults would be offered to the Body and Blood of the LORD and GOD of all things. Well, then; and here the Prophet says, "Though the fields shall yield no meat." And so, dear Sisters, I come to your own consciences again. You know how often even the Blessed Sacrament itself has seemed to kindle no love in you: how often, even when the HOLY GHOST has come down in all His power, and wrought the change, still you have remained cold and insensible, still you seemed to have no part nor lot in the matter, still that which should have been your greatest comfort has been the source of no consolation at all. Let us hear S. Bernard again, for I know not whom we should hear better. "Doth this trouble thee, O faithful soul, and beloved of thy LORD, that in the Blood poured forth from Calvary, there is no consolation for thee? in the Body that hung on the Cross, there is no strength for thy weakness? O weak of faith and slow of heart! I have heard a hundred times from those who have before us trodden the valley of Baca, I have read again and again in the writings of the Saints of GOD, that so, in their day, it was with them: so, I mean, in feeling and outward appearance. For the same coldness they mourned, for the same dry-

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ness and barrenness they were sore disquieted, crying out with David, 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar:' lamenting with Hezekiah, 'I shall go softly all my days in the bitterness of my soul.' But temptations came, but trouble came, but the tempests of sorrow and fear came, and then how mightily did they arise in the strength of that meat and of that drink! Then how did they breast the waves of temptation! Then how did they stand fast against the overflowings of ungodliness! Then how were these, that awhile before were all weakness, all infirmity, all coldness, made more than conquerors! This is the wile, beloved brethren," (he was speaking to them, then: to the Sisters to whom this great Saint often spoke so lovingly, he would have said it even more strongly,) "this is the wile by which Satan seeks to draw you from the pillar of your faith, from the sheet-anchor of your love. What are you that you should complain, if for once, if for twice, if for many times, the LORD should not vouchsafe to make Himself known to you in the breaking of bread? The disciples sat with Him in safety at Emmaus, and He manifested not Himself to them; but let the same disciples meet where

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there is fear and danger of the Jews, and then 'came JESUS, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you!' As with them, so will it be with you: be content, if it needs must be so, that He should, even in the Blessed Sacrament, be for a while hidden from you: the time ill come, when He shall no more speak unto you in parables, but shall shew you plainly of Himself and of the FATHER."

And lastly: "The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls." That is, we see others fall away, their sad shortcomings, their miserable mistakes. We see the Saints of the LORD tried, and fail: and then it is so hard to remember that the LORD of the Saints is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The flock may wander from Him; but He never can leave them. The flock may be faithless; the Shepherd was faithful to death.

And you may say, that all the text and all the sermon are full of nothing but discouragement. Dearest Sisters, so is all our Christian life; and there is but one thing that it is more full of, and that is,—encouragement. All these things which daily happen to you,—all these things which two thousand five hundred years ago were written in Habakkuk, have been the lot

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and inheritance of those blessed ones now before the Throne of GOD and of the Lamb. Their labours and his prophecy ended alike. Though this, and though the other, though such a trouble, and though such another temptation,—"Yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation; the LORD GOD is my strength." Notice there, how dimly indeed, but surely, he spoke of the Trinity: "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD," the FATHER Who so loved the world; "the GOD of my salvation," which He wrought on the Cross; "the LORD GOD of my strength," the good SPIRIT Who dwelleth in me, and by Whom I hope to be more than conqueror.

"They that say such things," S. Paul says, "declare plainly that they seek a country." And they that have taken up such a life as yours, dear Sisters, declare plainly that they have made up their mind for all sorts of difficulties, and for all manner of discouragements. I wish that I could bear them more with you, that I could assist you more in bearing them. And this let us pray: that, if it be GOD's Will, they may be from without, not from within: that we may not be allowed to be stumbling-blocks and discouragements to each other: that from each other, at least, we may have comfort

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and help: that, being all helped by our One and Only and Beloved LORD, we may help each other in Him and for Him: and so, finally, after bearing the Cross, whatever it is, valiantly, may be comforted in Jerusalem,—whatever *that* also may mean,—eternally!

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLVII.

THE LORD'S HOUSE.

"*Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the* LORD."*—HAG. i. 8.

[1862.]

THESE are the words you say daily: but not in the sense in which I take them now. In your sense, I see in answer *such* an instrument of serving GOD, so numerous Sisters, such a crowd of orphans—boys as well as girls—such a home for those who have passed the threescore years and ten. If I could only see *that*, set up, and working: and working with Sisters most self-denying, most obedient, most pure, how joyfully I would say my Nunc Dimittis!

But there is a higher sense than that: yes, *even* than that: and of this I am going to speak to you now.

"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood." I

* The Antiphon to the daily Memorial said in the Sisterhood "for the New House."

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see the cloudy afternoon of a spring day: I see a hill, crowded with spectators; some few pitying, the greater part reviling. I see at the foot of this hill a city, glorious with battlements and ramparts and portals,—*most* glorious with a temple, pitched on the edge of a ravine, and throwing back the rays of the sinking sun from its western walls (one hundred and forty feet high) of pure white marble. And I see two men, fulfilling the command here, "Go up to the mountain." These are S. Joseph of Arimathea, and S. Nicodemus, bearing up their ointments and preparations, to make ready a most dear and pure Body for the grave.

"Go ye up to the mountain." My Sisters, what is it that you bear on your breasts? Is it not the likeness of that which stood on the mountain then? What do you wear on your heads? Is it not the likeness of His veiling the glory of the Godhead, in the misery of the Humanity? What is on your finger? O most dear and precious ring, if only she who wears it acts up to her vows: poor, for His sake, Who emptied Himself, as says the Apostle, for you: obedient, for His sake, Who became —(became, after all that glory, after all that co-eternal and co-equal Majesty, that He had with the FATHER before all worlds,) so poor that

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He had not where to lay His Head: vowed to chastity for His sake, the Lover of Virgin souls.

"Go ye up to the mountain." And some of you have obeyed entirely. There were—how well we all remember them!—difficulties, troubles, trials, vexations, aye, and to our human eyes, impossibilities; they have been overcome. Some of you here are toiling up that mountain still; your probation is not yet accomplished, and you have yet need of patience.

Now, why go up to the mountain? It tells you. "And bring wood." See, dearest Sisters, how beautifully the two things agree. Our True Isaac carried the wood up that weary and yet most holy mountain. "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Where? "And when JESUS had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His Head, and gave up the ghost." There He left that most precious, most dear, most victorious wood: there He reigned, as it is written, "on Mount Sion, and before His ancients gloriously." He carried it up there: now you are to go up and fetch it thence. Some have gone, some are going up—so far, literally. But, in the higher sense, O my dearest Sisters, how far have you done so spiritually? There were many little crosses to

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be taken up in this very house this very day. (There was a very poor little small cross this morning.) But that nothing, nothing, is small in His service, I should not dare to speak of what the world calls so very little. Was there any one of you, who because of self-indulgence, had to hurry over—I will not believe that any one omitted—her Collects on first rising? Is there any one, who being teazed by our children, lost her temper with them? Is there any one who was vexed at obeying an order; did it indeed, but did it unwillingly? Is there any one who, for never so small a time, but that is vague—is there any one who, say, for half a minute, allowed her thoughts to wander willingly, when she was before the Blessed Sacrament? Well then, is that bringing wood?

"Such little wood: how can that build the house?" Listen, dear Sisters. "Behold, I am gathering"—what? two beams, or two pieces of timber? No: "two sticks." And by that little cross, little, that is to human eyes, came salvation to the poor woman and her son: came salvation then, and a little after, the second raising of that same son from death; which never would have been, but for the Prophet's first knowledge of him.

"And build the House." *The* House, mind

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you: not *an* House. The House that He has appointed: not the House that your own ideas may have framed. And, first of all, the interior house. That house, which each of you may be, and ought to be, building from morning till night. Before you lie down in your beds this evening, there will be several additions that ought to be made to it. Well: will they be made? Instead of grasping, (griping, I might say,) with all the strength of your souls, at Matins, will you let those dear and lovely Psalms slide over your ears, and only give them an external sense? Shall I hear to-morrow from any of you, "I broke the rule of silence?" When? "Once or twice," or what it may be, "after supper." Will you say your last Collects with your whole heart and soul? And, when the light is out, and you are left alone with GOD, will you try with all your strength that your last thoughts may be with Him! Come: I will give you a text to think of then; a text, if anyhow lovely, even more so in its mystical sense: "Yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee." You may treat it in many beautiful ways.

"*The* House." Externally: "The House that My most chosen Saints have dwelt in, the House which has always been the especial hate of the men of this world, the House which among you I

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have lately vouchsafed to raise up—the Religious Life." Is it not a privilege to work in that erection? and to work with our true and loving Elisha? When they built the new house, said one of the sons of the Prophets to him, "Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants; and he answered, I will go." Then first:—in this our attempt, with other dear Sisterhoods, to raise up again the Religious Life in this our Church, shall we not ask His help? Shall we not say, "O LORD JESUS, Lover of Chastity, Lover of Obedience, Lover of Poverty, Thou, Who didst Thyself when on earth so commend to Thine Apostles the Higher Life: help these Thy servants, here, and wherever else, to build up this Thy Jerusalem that is broken down. We are utterly powerless, O Omnipotent Word, without Thee; we are utterly loveless, O loving Lamb, without Thee; we are utterly impure, O marvellous Shrine of Purity, without Thee. But, LORD, we believe, help Thou our unbelief. Make us that which Thou wouldest have us; and then make by us what Thou wouldst have made by our means!"

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And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLVIII.

WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD.

"*The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the* LORD *of Hosts hath sent me unto you.*" —Zech. iv. 9.

[1857.]

JUST as the line of the Jewish Prophets was about to come to an end, they spoke more gloriously, they foretold more minutely, they predicted more clearly of that Lamb of GOD in Whom prophecy was to end. And it was not unmeet that there should be one burst of sunshine, before so long a night: when, for nearly four hundred years, darkness was to cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, before the Desire of all nations came: when there were to be all those cruel wars of the Maccabees; all that savage persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, where the Martyrs might even set an example to those of CHRIST'S own Church.

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Already the foundations of that temple were laid, in which His blessed feet were afterwards to walk; already the walls were rising, concerning which He was to prophesy, that not one stone should be left upon another that should not be thrown down.

But, my dear Sisters, we will turn away our eyes from the type, and fix them on the antitype: we will look away from that earthly temple, rising slowly—rising in the midst of difficulty and danger, rising with enemies on every side—to that temple, of which our LORD is Himself the Zerubbabel; to that temple which He desires to find each of you, and wherein He longs to dwells now, that He may dwell for ever. See what is the prophecy: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it." And you know, dearest Sisters, how that temple could never have been begun in you, but by Him. He only would have desired it; He only would have chosen Sion for Himself, and have longed for her. What was there in any of you but sin, weakness, defilement, when He first set His love upon you; when He first said: "This shall be Mine?" I am not speaking now of those temples which you, in common with all Christians, are; but of those temples of which

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you especially are: more emphatically His own, more singularly dedicated; so that He is not only to have your first and best love, but all; not your most earnest thoughts alone, but every thought: that temple which is made up of your whole spirit and soul and body. There was a time when, if it had been said to any of you,—if it had been said to others about you: "She will become a Sister of Mercy; she will desire the glorious privilege of a Bride of CHRIST; she, for His sake, will sacrifice earthly pleasure and comfort and love, that she may be His only, His everlastingly:" their words would have seemed as idle tales, and you would have believed them not. But, by degrees, nevertheless, He began that temple; He taught you that there was a higher life than that which you were proposing to lead; He put the desire for it into your mind, He overcame difficulties both within and without; the fancy became a real wish, the wish became a real determination; and so, having obtained help of GOD, you continue to this day. You first resolved that you would be more CHRIST'S, and then, that you would be wholly CHRIST'S. You came to your first Confession, cost what it might; and so further and further on, till it is as, by the grace of GOD, it is now. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid

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the foundation of this house." And how was that first house begun? When that spot of ground only was GOD'S; when Jerusalem was not as yet, nor for many years afterwards, encircled with a wall, but lay open to the incursions of the heathen. Every stone that was laid cost a battle as well as an effort; every progress gained was answered by the mockery and scoffing of their enemies: of the temple, as afterwards of the wall, it was said: "Behold that which they build; if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." You see the likeness still, dear Sisters. You know that this life you have chosen is not in favour with the world; and GOD forbid it ever should be. You know, each of you, what difficulties you have had to surmount, what opposition GOD has enabled you to struggle through; and do not think that I mean only or chiefly external opposition: I mean the opposition aimed, not so much at your being Sisters in name, as Sisters in deed. However, notwithstanding all,—however, through all,—however, yes, and by means of all, "the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house." And you know how the laying the foundation of that house was received by the old men that had seen the former house: they wept with a loud voice: while the

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younger generation that was fresh from Babylon shouted aloud for joy. And this is worth notice. It was fifty-three years since the first temple had been burnt to the ground. But it was twenty-two years before that since it had stood in anything of its original glory: for then Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, had carried away all the treasures that were found in the house of the LORD; and, in the short and miserable and wicked reigns that followed, they had never been replaced. Now these old men, for there were many of them, mark you, could not possibly have remembered seventy-five years back. They were comparing this new temple, then, not with the temple of Solomon, not even with the temple of Jehoshaphat, or Hezekiah, or Josiah, but with the husk of its former grandeur, with the poor remains of its real beauty. And yet, so great was the contrast between that and the present building, that they wept aloud, and the noise was heard afar off. And what happened then? Then, notwithstanding all that contrast,—then, in the midst of all that sorrow,—then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message, "I am with you, saith the LORD."

So we might all well be discouraged when we compare what you are, what you can do, what you can bear, with the efforts of your

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happier Sisters in past ages. But there is this difference. The new temple, in the natural state of things, could not equal the old: it was by no man's fault; a poor and captive nation could not set up those walls, and overlay them with that gold which he who excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and honour, could produce. But with you it is different. Not with this external house where you live; not with this poor little oratory in which we meet,—there the contrast is none of your own fault, but in yourselves. Unless by your own faults,—there is no reason why the glory of the latter house should not equal the glory of the former: the Builder is the same; His riches are the same; His skill is the same; His love is the same. If you have not all the grace they had, it is because you do not struggle for it hard enough, long enough, perseveringly enough.

"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house: His hands shall also finish it." And, oh dear Sisters, when I see how much finishing, how much completion, how much preparation the temple of each of your hearts wants, well it is indeed for you that it is the part of the true Zerubbabel to finish it! What can *I* do for you? How can I help you? How can I prevent your falling again and again

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into those sins which most easily beset you? I can hear them in Confession; I can warn you against them; I can make you promise that you will not give way to them; I can pray with you against them; but I can do no more. The same LORD that gave you grace to begin, must also give you grace to persevere. The same hands which laid the foundation must, in due time, set up the corner-stone. For now see, each of you, how much is left unfinished in this your spiritual temple,—how you often begin well, and then something hinders you;—how you often run the race with patience for a time, and then something thwarts and harasses you; you are so watchful, so careful, and then some unhappy day you relax for a moment, and it seems as if all the work had to be begun again.

Dearest Sisters, these things ought not so to be. They ought not, but they will be; will be now, will be to the end. For there is an end: and the prophet tells us what it is; "He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." How long or how short a time first, what does it matter? how much or how little suffering in the meanwhile, why need we anxiously care? Oh, if the building be only getting on,—oh, if the LORD of the Temple be

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only looking down well pleased, what matter the biting of the chisel, the shock of the hammer, the heavy fall of the mallet? All those whom the LORD has more especially chosen, have been more especially tried in the same way. "He *shall* bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it!"

Some day, one of you will kneel by me here —unless it may please GOD that I should go hence first,—will for the last time lay down the burden of her sin, little, it may be, or great, at the foot of the Cross, for the last time undergo the misery and humiliation of saying, "I have grievously sinned, by my fault, by my own grievous fault:" and then *that* warfare will be accomplished. Some day one of you will have the last struggle with Satan and with self, —will for the last time conquer,—and then that warfare will be accomplished. Some day one of you will kneel for the last time by that desk which has seen so many earnest prayers, so many desires after higher things, so many cries to GOD for help, —and then that warfare will be accomplished. Some day one of you will do her last active work of mercy—"Me ye have not always,"— and return home, probably with the full expectation that she has more work to do for GOD. But no: "Man goeth forth to his work and to his

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labour *until* the evening:" and so that warfare will be accomplished.

Then the head-stone will be set on: then the whole building will be complete: then the edifice, fitly joined together, will have grown into a temple, perfectly holy to the LORD. And then we shall see it no more.

I cannot but think, dearest Sisters, that if there be one joy greater than another,—after that of seeing Him Who is incomparably the joy of joys,—it will be the remembering all the way that the LORD our GOD has brought us in this world. We doubtless shall remember all our earthly journey: we shall doubtless see it all marked out as on a map, and how can it but be sweet to look back on all the past dangers, the difficulties, then over for ever, the struggles with which we can never have any more to do? "Do you remember,"—so one of you might well ask me then, if GOD of His great goodness shall ever count us, miserable sinners, worthy to stand in the company of the Blessed—"do you remember how, at that time, I so nearly went astray? how then I was all but weary in well doing? how at such a difficulty my faith almost gave way? how at such a piece of self-denial my strength almost failed?" O dear Sisters, these things are not fables! We feel in our very

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heart of hearts that they are true! The happy ones that have gone before us are even at this moment so looking back to their past journeys, —so pitying us, who as yet know not what is the bright and blessed change; and some day our turn will also come.

"Crying, Grace, grace, unto it." Why this double repetition of *grace?* For one of two reasons. He may mean the grace of CHRIST as the Author, and the grace of CHRIST as the Finisher, of our faith: the grace which began the good work, and the grace which completed it: the grace of well setting forth, and the far greater and more blessed grace of perseverance. Or he may mean the grace which is necessary for the Church Militant, and that which is bestowed on the Church Triumphant. You all know the definition of Grace: "The free and supernatural gift of GOD, whereby we merit eternal life." That, indeed, is a definition which is made for this world: but the same grace which helped us to win, must also enable us to hold. To all eternity, if we are ever admitted into that blessed place, we shall still need it: and hence, very likely, the repetition of the word here, and the prayer that with the finished temple it may still abide.

And if the text fits you, dear Sisters, does it

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not fit also the Festival on which we have now entered? Has it not long since been fulfilled in every blessed Saint whose memorial we keep on earth, and who has himself long since seen the goal of all his labours, the crown of all his fights, the head-stone set to the hard-wrought and slowly constructed temple? "Grace, grace," has long since been shouted there: no more building now, one hand on the sword, the other hand on the builder's tool;—no more watching now, no more striving now, no more sin to confess, no more temptations to fear. So let us come to this Festival, as those who say the same things, as those who equally desire a better country, that is an heavenly; as those of whom, in like manner, GOD will not be ashamed to be called their GOD. Those desires you have earnestly; that work you have begun resolutely; this above all things you must pray for: final perseverance. GOD grant that I may never, never hear those bitter words of any of you: "She *did* run well; who did hinder her that she should not obey the truth?" GOD grant that our dear LORD may never say of any of you, as it was said of one that was once zealous: "Demas hath forsaken Me, having loved this present world, and is departed:" that that sad history may never be true of any of you: "From that

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time, many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." O how easy to begin! more than to begin, to go a good way, as they had done! They acknowledged His Incarnation; they were not discouraged at His poor and hard life; but the Mystery of His Body and Blood,—that was their stumbling block—that shut them out from following Him to the end. And so with you: you may overcome many difficulties, may resist many temptations: but some fatal day, some one temptation may overthrow all; some one difficulty may be allowed to be insuperable. Oh how earnestly have you need to pray each for herself, and I for you all: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; let His hands also finish it!"

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XLIX.

CROWNED WITH MANY CROWNS.

"Take of them of the captivity. . . . Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech the High Priest; and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD *of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch."*—ZECH. vi. 10-12.

[TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1857.]

HERE is a text which speaks of that at which you are aiming,—crowns: of that under which you are suffering,—captivity: and of that to which you must make up your minds in every shape,—affliction. It must be a fit text for you, speaking, as it does, of your present condition, your future way, and your final end.

Now, what is the message to Zechariah? "Take of them of the captivity." Of the captivity! But they had returned to Jerusalem. If the message had come to Daniel at Babylon, then I could have understood it: if it had come to Jeremiah, when Nebuchadnezzar was carrying away the last of the Jews, nothing more natural.

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But to those that had returned from their house of bondage, and not only so, but who were then engaged in building the House of GOD,—they who in this very prophecy are addressed as "men wondered at,"—they to whom such glorious promises were made, and to whom it was foretold by Him that cannot lie, that the glory of this latter house should be greater than the glory of the former, than that magnificent temple of Solomon's,—they to be called children of the captivity! Even so. The walls of Jerusalem were thrown down; all its enemies might attack the few poor trembling dwellers in it; they lived, as it were, by the king of Persia's permission; very weak they were, very despised, carrying everywhere the remembrance of their bondage; a kind of exiles in their own country.

And, dear Sisters, does not the same character apply to you? True, you have come out of the world: true, you have renounced all other service for that of the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and LORD of lords: Who to you is not only the Potentate and the King, but *the* Beloved, but "*my* Beloved:" true, you are endeavouring to build Him a temple, a temple in each of your own hearts, where He, and He alone, might dwell for ever; and a temple common to all of you,—this house

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where you are, and where I trust that many a sacrifice of love and faith will be made to His glory. But are you not children of the captivity still? Do not your own consciences tell you how you are tied and bound with the chains of sin and infirmity? You would be free from it; you would break it off altogether; you would cast it away from you; but you cannot. You would not do anything that could grieve or offend Him Whom you love best; and yet how often you do so! Then see what was the command with respect to these Jews, like yourselves, engaged in the service of GOD alone—like yourselves also, children of the captivity.

"Then take silver and gold." And if we ask where he was to get it, we shall find the answer in that chapter of Job, where he says: "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it; iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone." Out of the earth. And so from us who are of earth, and to earth must return, whose hearts are indeed as hard as stone, He desires the silver and gold of love to Him, of good works done for His sake, of those good works which He has prepared for us to walk in. But Job tells us something further about this. "Surely," says he, "there is a place for gold where they

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fine it." *A* place only: not places. And what place? Surely none other than that in which our dear LORD Himself, in so far as He was Man, was, as S. Paul says, "made perfect:" the place of suffering and of self-denial. This is that furnace which, if it be heated seven times more than it is wont to be heated, and the Three Children are cast into it, the SON of GOD Himself will be their Companion, the fourth of that glorious company. This is that furnace in which Job himself, while he spoke of it, was being tried: this is that furnace in which all of GOD's servants have been purified, from that time to this. This is that furnace in which you all will have to be purified, dearest Sisters: who can tell, and why need we try to guess, in how many ways? This only it concerns you to know, that, let them be what they may,—let them be to each of you apart, or to all of you in common, here or elsewhere,—mental or physical, or both,—those lips that spake as never man spake have one of their sweetest declarations for you: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." And what is your answer? What loving reply can be fitted to so loving an address? "Most gladly therefore." Whatever the length or course of those sufferings may be, this ought to

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come in again and again, and give a tone to them all, as the Invitatory comes into the ninety-fifth psalm, and gives it its own sense and hue. And this I know, dearest Sisters, that of many and many a suffering, or hardship, or labour, you would at once and cheerfully say, "Most gladly therefore;" that many a sacrifice you would most thankfully offer to Him, Who sacrificed His own Body and His own Blood for you; that many an act of self-denial you would willingly undergo for the sake of Him, Who pleased not Himself. When will it be that you are ready to endure, not several things, not many things, but *all* things, for His sake? When will it be that you can do, not several things, not many things, but all things, through CHRIST Which strengtheneth you? Will it ever be in this world? or, for that, must we wait till the time when out of weakness you shall indeed be made strong? out of imperfection you shall indeed be made perfect? out of sorrow and fear you shall have everlasting joy on your heads?

Well then, we have the silver and gold. And now, what is to be the use of them? Notice: for it is well worth attending to. In the first place: "make crowns." So it is, that if, on the whole, and in the sum, the light affliction,

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which is but for a moment, worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, then every little detail which went to make up that account, every little item which helped to swell that sum of affliction, will also go to make up, will also be treasured to brighten, the weight of glory. It is not without a meaning, besides the general wish of honouring the LORD of all things with the best of His own creatures—it is not without a deep meaning, that we use diamonds in adorning that Chalice from which we drink life and immortality. First, remember that diamond and charcoal are exactly of the same substance, that diamond is only charcoal in another shape: and then see how here again we have the furnace of affliction set forth in all its glorious results. The poor perishable wood charred in that heat, till scarcely a trace of its original substance remained;—then in the course of ages turned into the brightest of jewels; and yet that jewel again obliged to be cut and worked and polished before it can be found meet to glitter in silver or in gold. Let the very Chalice, dear Sisters, out of which you receive the Blood of our LORD, teach you that lesson in its diamonds.

"Make crowns." That is the end and aim of all suffering then, the end of all discipline, of all

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hardness well borne. That is the especial object of all that you do or bear. It is to prepare that crown which your LORD desires to bestow on you at the latter day. And oh if I, who have so often here spoken to you of that furnace in which only their gold can be refined, should some day be permitted to see you wear them! What more *could* I wish? what greater fulfilment of joy *could* I desire? And notice that it is said, "Make crowns;" not, *I* will make them. This is what depends on yourselves. GOD gives you the opportunities of making them: but whether you use those opportunities—that is in your hands. You may suffer here, and never reign there. "Have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you." S. Bernard, the gentlest and most comforting of all the Saints that ever wrote—he whose words have consoled the hearts of more of GOD'S servants than perhaps those of any Father of the Church—nevertheless says in a certain place,—and the saying has been proved terribly true,—"There is no easier way to hell than through a Convent." Those wise old painters who used to draw their representations of the Last Judgment on the chancel arches of our

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churches,—how did they picture the multitude of those on the left side, that went down quick into the pit? Not as infidels and heathens and Turks, but, for the greater part, as those especially vowed to GOD—Priests, Bishops, the Religious Orders,—as if to show how much more terrible in that strict account would be their condemnation!

It goes on: "And set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest." I do not know that, throughout the whole of the Old Testament, any one is spoken of in equal terms of praise with this servant of GOD. He is the only man under the old Law, unless I am mistaken, as the centurion is the only man under the new, concerning whom GOD Himself is said to have wondered. But the remarkable part of the story is this: it is almost impossible to distinguish between Joshua, as the Jewish high priest, and Joshua, as the type of the Great High Priest Whose name he bore; for as we all know, Joshua and Jesus are one and the same name. Of him it is said, "Thus speaketh the LORD of Hosts: Behold the man whose name is the Branch"—or rather, *the East:* that East, whence the true light comes—that East, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us. It is almost impossible, then, to separate the type

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from the antitype. And, dearest Sisters, this is not without its lesson, and a glorious lesson too.

The crowns for which you are trying, the crowns which,—except it be by your own fault, your weariness in well-doing, your putting your hand to the plough and then turning back—GOD is even now preparing for you, are they for yourselves alone? Surely not. See how in that description of the blessed company of the redeemed, the multitude that no man can number, those that came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the LAMB, "they cast their crowns before His feet." See how it is said that on His Head are many crowns. Why? Because each of the crowns that each of His people wins for himself, he wins for his LORD also: because all that you, dearest Sisters, do for Him, every victory you win, every hardship you endure, is won not more for yourselves than for Him.

You win or endure it by His grace; you win or endure it to His glory. Take this story either way: take Joshua the son of Josedech in his own person, subject to like passions and weaknesses with yourselves; made strong, but out of weakness,—made holy, but out of sin,—made pure, but out of impurity,—well; the crowns

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were for him and are for you. Or take him, if you will, as the type of the True Joshua, strong in His own strength, holy in His own holiness, pure in His own purity; for that Joshua the crowns you are trying to earn are also. If of His fulness you receive, shall you not return to Him of that which He gives you? Shall not that saying of the wise man be fulfilled? "All the rivers run into the sea: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen

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SERMON L.

BRIGHT CLOUDS.

Ask ye of the LORD *rain in the time of the latter rain; so the* LORD *shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*"—ZECH. x. 1.

[1857, AND AGAIN, ADVENT, 1860.]

[THE time of the latter rain, according to the Jewish Church Kalendar, was the present; and accordingly, the command of Zechariah here, has always been considered by CHRIST'S Church, an Advent text.]

Just before this, the prophet has spoken about "the Corn of the mighty, and the Wine that blossoms into virgins." Then, more than at any other time, then, with the braver confidence, then, with the bolder access, then with the deeper faith, "Ask ye of the LORD rain." Take it in two senses: both true, both beautiful; the gift of grace, or the gift of sorrow for sin.

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass." The sun is veiled for a time;

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sadness and gloominess come over the face of nature; the great black clouds gather, the wind rises, the colours of the landscape fade, and we know that the summer shower is at hand. So, when sorrow or trial besets us, when temptation hovers around us, when the Sun of Righteousness seems veiled from us, it is but a sign that He will, ere long, pour out His grace more abundantly upon us. The GOD of grace and the GOD of nature are One: the showers come from a clear sky neither in one case nor the other. Or take it of the gift of sorrow for sin, the greatest and best gift, next to that of innocence. There was no rain in Paradise: there will be no tears of penitence in the Heavenly Paradise; but while we are aliens and exiles from that, the flowers and fruit of good works that we are to offer to the LORD can only thus be kept alive; and the more abundant sorrow, the more abundant flourishing.

It seems, at first sight, difficult to reconcile these two: the entire forgiveness of sins in Absolution, and yet the necessity of sorrowing for them still: but when we come to think a little more deeply, we see that not only the two are not opposed to each other, but that the one involves the other. You come to me here, and confess. You come, you are certain of it in your heart

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of hearts, with true sorrow for sin: you could say, "I am sorry and I lament for this sin, not only because it deserves punishment,—not because of the shame and pain of confessing it, but because it has offended the LORD Whom I love." So surely as you can say that, so surely do the words of Absolution put away that sin in such a manner, that it will be found blotted out when the books are opened at the Last Day. But shall we not grieve all the more to have offended, because He so graciously pardons?

And more than this. While we are in doubt about pardon, our sorrow for sin must of necessity be mixed up with our fear of punishment. We cannot tell whether it is grief for the offence, or grief for the possible consequences. But once remove that fear, and the sorrow has its full effect. The terror of the servant is gone: but the love, the deep, yearning love of the child comes out the more vividly. And this is one reason among many why, after Confession, especially after a first Confession, we ought to keep the sad records of our sins by us. Partly, as I have often told you, that we may see what progress we have made, or how we have gone backward: but partly, also, for this reason, that though forgiven, though received again

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into GOD'S favour, though the pardoned and the dear children, we may be able more vividly to recall these causes of sorrow, the more lovingly to remember GOD'S goodness to us in putting them away. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted:" comforted "as one whom his mother comforteth:" "comforted in Jerusalem."

"Ask ye of the LORD rain." So we may, so we must, ask for His grace at all times; but yet at some times more than at others. But let us first understand this expression, "of the latter rain." It might, in one sense, more truly be called the former. We are to understand that, although according to the express command of GOD, the month Abib was the first month of the Jewish ecclesiastical year, yet the old civil year still, and always, was reckoned to begin in autumn. Then the former rains fell: and the latter in April or March, just when everything was budding: and thence it is that the prophet Joel calls it, "The latter rain in the first month." Asking for rain, then, in the time of the latter rain, is asking it when the whole foliage and fruits of the year depend on it; and there is the lesson for us. Again we have the GOD of nature working as the GOD of grace also works. We all know that there

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are critical times in the day and in the year, when the weather, if it changes at all, is likely to change for good: when the character of the succeeding season seems fixed, when rains or clouds pass off or come on. And so there ought to be marked seasons in every Christian life: it is good to multiply them, it is good to make much of them: weak and feeble creatures as we are, all such way-marks, whence we may begin again, cannot but help us.

And for Sisters, this is most especially true. For those that have wholly, entirely, and for ever, taken up this life, pledged themselves beyond recall, fearlessly and lovingly thrown in their part, for ever and ever, with the Bridegroom of the Virgins, there are two marked days in the year above others, which they are bound to observe,—each day itself as a Festival, but, I am sure, with a vigil before it:—the anniversary of their Baptism, and that of their vow of perpetual chastity. Those are *the* two epochs of a Sister's life: the most unspeakably blessed, or the most unspeakably dismal and lamentable, that can form part of her existence. But, for all of you, there are days which you are bound to observe: nights to be much remembered, as Moses says, unto the LORD, for bringing you, in a greater or less degree, out of the

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land of Egypt. That of your Baptism: that of your Confirmation: that of your first Communion: that of your first Confession, and that of your Profession here, whether for a time only, or for ever. Make the most of these days, dearest Sisters: let them be new starting points: "they will go from strength to strength;" let these be each a new strength: days for stricter self-examination: wells, as it were, in the desert of your pilgrimage: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation;" "times of the latter rain," as the Prophet speaks in the text.

Or, to take that in another sense. The latter rain fell, as I said, in the month of the Passover: therefore, in the season of our LORD'S Passion. At all remembrances of that, in all occasions which bring that to mind, is it not the time of asking grace? At Passion-tide, we know, the windows of Heaven are opened, and a blessing is rained down, so that there is not room enough to receive it. And Friday might be a little Passion-tide for you. No one should be over-persuaded or entreated, much less compelled, to the use of any particular species of devotion. But still, the more delight I see any of you taking in the Stations, the greater comfort for me. That devotion is the School of Saints:

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and in such a school, who would not long to see those whom he loves?

"So the LORD shall make bright clouds." And now, if I had to describe a Sister's life as briefly, as simply, and yet as graphically as possible; if I had to paint it, as it were, as well as to define it, could I choose a truer and lovelier expression than that,—"bright clouds?" Think of its many sorrows, its many temptations, its many dull, weary times, on the one side: on the other, "In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, Thy comforts have refreshed my soul." And what are all these but bright clouds? Think of its storms and darkness, but think of Him also Whose ways are in the sea, and His paths in the deep waters, and Who causeth the light to shine out of darkness: and what is this but "bright clouds?" Think of nights of watching, but the LORD for a fellow-watcher: think of days of journeying, but the LORD for a fellow-traveller: think of ministering to the sick, or, rather, under their form, to Him Who Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses: and what is all this but "bright clouds?" Nothing can be truer: no type more exact. In the first place, if the clouds are to be bright, the sun must be near: invisible to us, it may be, but certainly

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shining on them. Next, it is that which, in itself, gives the clouds their horror and gloom, which being thus touched, lights up into the most super-eminent beauty. Think of a bank of evening clouds, full of great chasms, of wide clefts, of huge jagged splinters, unformed shapeless pinnacles, tottering crags; all, scenes of horror and gloom in themselves. Then, let a ray of the sun fall on it, and how it glorifies and transmutes and transfigures those very self-same wild scenes! turning the horrible into the beautiful, making the sunset clouds which we love to gaze on.

Yes, dearest Sisters, your own sins, your own infirmities, Satan's temptations, the world's hatred, your very vocation, will make the clouds: my earnest prayer for you all is, that the LORD may make them *bright* clouds!

"And give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Can anything express more beautifully the Communion of Saints, and yet the incorporation of each one with our most blessed and loving LORD? The showers are to be on *them:* and yet, on every one blade of grass. On them, that glorious company of which we form a part: that vast and exceeding great army in which we are soldiers: that multitude which no man can number, to whom

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we belong. These showers of rain have indeed fallen from the Day of Pentecost till now. What is all the history of the Church but a history of grace? And what is the history of each individual soul but a history of the Church in brief? As you well know, we may take the Canticles as descriptive of the universal Church, or of the individual Christian: so well does that which is said of the one hold true of the other. And so it is that "He gives *them* showers of rain, to every *one* grass in the field."

And when the drop of rain, or of dew, falls on the individual blade, what follows? The nourishment and refreshment, we know, of the tender grass itself: but is that all? Not so. That very drop hangs on the blade, transmuted there to a thousand colours; let but the sun shine on a dewy field, and—"I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

"To every one grass." "Known unto GOD are all His works from the beginning of the world." Known to that dear LORD on the Cross was the history of every one of you from the beginning of the time that she was first made His. Should that be most consoling, or most humbling? Most consoling, a thousand times. He That foresaw all things, He That foresaw

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how often you would act unworthily of your profession, yet, with that foreknowledge, set His love upon you still. As if there were none but each of you, so He has watched you, so He has tended you, so He has given you of His grace, so He loves you, so you are His. As dearly loved as if you were His only one, in the midst of the happy and glorious number, all as onely, all as dear.

"Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain." And they take it also to mean that the rain of penitential tears will one day bring down the rain of GOD's richest blessings. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." But these rains will not make the flowers appear on the earth at once, any more than those of nature do. They must have their perfect work: "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Oh dear Sisters, the whole sum and substance of what I can say to you, the end and aim of all my wishes for you, all is comprised in one of the spiritual works of mercy,—that you may be able to *bear*. To bear, not as Simon of Cyrene bore his cross, but as the LORD bore His: to bear it in action, as He *up* Mount Calvary; to bear it in passion, as He *on* Mount Calvary.

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And then the time will come that all clouds, even bright clouds, will pass: that there will be no occasion for, no possibility of, the tears of penitence: that the Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth uncloudedly, the joy, the comfort, the exceeding and eternal great reward of His people. "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON LI.

HE GOETH BEFORE THEM.

"*And He shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away. And I will strengthen them in the* LORD; *and they shall walk up and down in His Name, saith the* LORD.—ZECH. x, 11, 12.

[1857.]

FOR it was not with affliction, but with joy and gladness, that His people, delivered out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, passed through the Red Sea, when they came from captivity to freedom, from the kingdom of Pharaoh to the place which GOD had appointed for them. It is as always: He, the Lord and Leader of His people, went first: they have only to follow. He went first in affliction: they have to follow with joy; He tasted of death: they have only to fall asleep; He was nailed to the Cross: but to them that Cross has blossomed abundantly, and brought forth the fruit of everlasting gladness.

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Here, dear Sisters, it is the same saying that you have in that Song of Habakkuk, which, as we said not long ago, is the Song of the Passion of our LORD. "Thou didst walk through the sea, through the heap of great waters." Here you are told *how:* "He shall pass through the sea with affliction:" when, as He says Himself, "Save Me, O GOD: for the waters are come in, even unto My soul." Take it of the sea of death, or of that sea of misery and affliction through which His path lay. Either way it is true: true that He has sanctified all suffering, as well as that He has hallowed death: true that though by His own Right Hand, and His Holy Arm He hath gotten Himself the victory, yet not till that Right Hand had been nailed to the Cross: not till that victory had been won at the price of His own life. And then notice how it follows: "He shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up." It does not promise that He shall smite the sea itself, as once of old time, when it was parted hither and thither: nor that the river shall be cut off, as when they first entered into the promised land, and the people went over dryshod. Dearest Sisters, you know that you have no such promise,—nay, that you have the promise

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of the very opposite. You know that you, after your own measure, and in your own way, have a Baptism to be baptized withal; that very passing through sorrow, whereof the passage through the Red Sea was in this sense also a type. But I am afraid we are all rather apt to make the same mistake in expecting GOD'S deliverance, that children, if you have noticed it, so often persist in making in their Catechism. "I desire my LORD GOD, our Heavenly Father, Who is the Giver of all goodness, that it will please Him to save and defend us *in* all dangers, ghostly and bodily." So stands, as we know, the answer; but the child will always say, "That it will please Him to save and defend us *from* all dangers ghostly and bodily." No: it is exactly in them, and not from them, that all His servants, that they more especially who have embraced a Sister's life, must look for defence. It is the waves of the sea, not the sea itself, that is to be rebuked: the deeps of Jordan, not the very river, which are to be dried. And what were those deeps into which He went down? Those unknown sufferings by which so many ancient Liturgies plead for salvation? So to be forsaken, so to bear the sins of the world, so to know from the beginning all

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things that should be accomplished, and yet to go forth,—so to foresee how His love would be rejected, and yet so to pour it forth. And why? The prophet immediately goes on: "The pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." Assyria, the great tyrant from the beginning, and to the end, over GOD's people: Egypt, from Genesis to Revelation, the type of the world. That was the cause why He thus passed through the sea of death, and put an end to the pride of him who in the beginning had said of himself, "I will be like the Most High," and who afterwards brought forward his first temptation with, "In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

And then comes the promise, which if it did not exist, then were our preaching vain, and your faith were also vain. "I will strengthen them in the LORD." Nothing less than that will do, dearest Sisters, for you. You must daily see it more and more: I see it for you and in you; and you must feel it for yourselves. Oh how little, in and by yourselves, are you equal to this your life! Oh how much better you should lay it down at once! Oh how impossible to bear this Cross of yours on towards Mount Sion, unless He had first borne His up

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to Mount Calvary! But when He has once said, "I will strengthen," what right have you to be weak any more? As Isaiah speaks more fully: "I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Take it, if you will, of the threefold work of the Ever-blessed Persons of the Trinity in the plan of our redemption. Take it, if you would rather, of the help against the three temptations that beset all;—the three bands that the Chaldæans make out,—the three companies that come out of the camp of the Philistines to spoil: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Or yet again, take it of the threefold enemy we have to face: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Anyhow, there is the promise for us of help: the promise of help brought by nothing less than the Death of Him That loved us, and the Resurrection from the dead of Him That is to be our Life. "'I will strengthen thee:' I, Whose eyes were blindfolded for thee, will lead thee by paths thou hast not known: I will make darkness light before thee, and crooked things straight. I, Who fell beneath My Cross for thee, I will uphold thee, cost thee what it may, in bearing thine to the end. I, to Whom they bowed the knee in mockery, will bruise, some

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day, all thine enemies under thy feet. I, over Whose Head, in the moment of My deepest humiliation, and not before, was set that royal title, 'JESUS of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,' will shew thee that thy only way to reign with Me is to suffer with Me. Let temptation come never so suddenly on thee, I will strengthen thee: let Satan never so anxiously desire to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, I will strengthen thee: and when thou art coming down to thy last affliction, when thou art girding thyself to thy last battle, then indeed the Eternal GOD shall be thy Refuge, and underneath shall be the everlasting arms."

And then comes that part of the prophecy which, above all others, I could wish to be fulfilled in you: "They shall walk up and down in His Name." To that Name you are dedicated, dearest Sisters, you know. All its titles and virtues and excellencies are renewed for you every morning: every morning you plead them before the Throne of GOD: every morning before He Himself comes among you, you call to remembrance the dearest and most comforting of His characters, and thus prepare yourselves to receive Him.* And see what a lovely

* Alluding to the daily repetition of the Litany of the Holy Name.

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expression that is, "They shall walk up and down in His Name." It implies defence, and it implies liberty. "Shall walk up and down," where no foe can come to assault them, where no tempest can fall upon them, where "the sun shall not smite them by day, neither the moon by night." It is as though He were speaking of some fair cloister, where those dedicated to Him may walk all day long: a safe cloister, a holy cloister, a part of His heavenly and everlasting Temple. And then the *walking* implies that which David in another place says: "Thou shalt make room enough under me for to go." That Name, dearest Sisters, by which it is your glory and your boast to be called, will shelter you everywhere, will consecrate you everywhere; not here only in your home, but abroad in the world: not in hours of prayer only, but in hours of work. And the very expression, "up and down," shews you more than this. It shews you that, lovingly as you, for your part, may cling to this Name, lovingly, as it, for its part, will protect you, still it will lead you into affliction often enough, as well as into joy. Think how the vanguard of the Israelites must have felt, when, in the rocky valleys of the wilderness—that waste howling wilderness—the pillar of cloud took the roughest and steepest and most intricate of all the defiles!

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How they must have almost longed to hang back, while yet there was no safety but in following: how, as it went on in a barren and dry land where no water was,—how, as it continued, hour after hour, to go forward under the sultriness of a burning sun and a brazen sky,—still they followed, with a good courage, because they were not yet come unto the rest and the land which the LORD their GOD gave them. So with you, dear Sisters. Wherever this Name leads you, there you must follow—wherever it goes with you, there you must be safe. O how happy each of you might be, if she would but always appropriate to herself, if she would but always lay up in her heart of hearts, if she would but rely with all her strength on those dear names that she takes on her lips every morning! If she would but realize how this Star of the Sea can guide her course to that place where, as the prophet says, "The glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby:" that this most poor King can supply all her wants, let them be what they may, according to the riches of His glory: that this most gentle LORD can comfort her in all her sorrows here, and hereafter more eternally and blessedly comfort her in Jerusalem: that this

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most obedient Prince, obedient unto death, has need of her full and perfect and ready obedience, whatever it may cost her, if she would be changed into His Likeness: that this Bridegroom of the Virgins has the dearest Name, the closest companionship, the happiest place for those, the lilies which He leads now, and among which He will feed hereafter. This it is to "walk up and down" in that Name: this is the help and the seclusion of that cloister: this, dearest Sisters, is what you may do, what you must do, now, if hereafter it is to be said of you, (as GOD grant of His infinite goodness it may be!), "And they shall see His Face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads."

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON LII.

STRONG IN THE POWER OF THE LORD.

"*In that day shall the* LORD *defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as* GOD, *as the angel of the* LORD *before them.*"—ZECH. xii. 8.

[ASCENSION, 1861.]

IN that day—but what day? And I suppose there is none of the great Festivals of the Church but has had this text applied to it by the Saints of the Church. Christmas? Surely: for then the LORD, the LORD GOD of Hosts, yet Emmanuel, GOD with us, came down to defend His Church on earth. Easter? Not less truly: for the Resurrection makes these bodies of ours, feeble as they are in themselves, like that which our True David, the Captain of our Salvation, joined to His Divine Nature,—never to be divided,—taking on Himself our weakness, giving to us His strength. But, perhaps, after all, the

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present Feast most really fulfils the prophecy. Let us see how the words and the joy of the day agree.

"In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem." In one sense, undoubtedly, if we take Jerusalem here, vaguely and uncertainly, for the whole Church, it is emphatically true. For the Ascension is the fulfilment of the Resurrection; as S. Paul told his Athenian hearers, that the assurance of our LORD's victory was His Resurrection from the dead. But, as you know, I do not like such vague and uncertain explanations. Jerusalem, you all know, is the Church Triumphant. How was that defended by the Ascension? Thus. We know that some of the Angels,—nay, even the third part of them,—once fell. Can they now fall? No. Why not? Because the same Passion which wrought our redemption, wrought their security; the same Passion which to us found its visible termination in the Resurrection, when our dear LORD came into our land, to them found it in the Ascension, when their most loving Monarch returned to theirs. Thenceforth, a safe eternity. Thenceforth, no more possibility of a fall. Thenceforth, with Angel as well as man, once made a pillar in the Temple of GOD, he can no more go out.

Indeed, there is a particularity in the prophecy

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which we shall do well to keep in mind. The verse before the text is: "The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah." Well: they take Judah as the new Gentile Church, now left alone in the world. The House of David they understand of the Synagogue, some day to be brought in: and Jerusalem, of those blessed ones who have already ended their course, and kept the faith. Then they take the next clause—(you ought almost to look at your Bibles, or you will not follow the interpretation; they then take the next clause)—"In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem," as a parenthesis. So that which follows,—our text,—"He that is feeble among *them*," does not mean among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those of Judah: the common denizens of the Church Militant.

That settled, we have three stages,—the inhabitants of Judah, the house of David, the denizens of Jerusalem. And then the first are, GOD'S servants in the secular life: the next, in the religious life: the third, His ransomed ones in the House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So the Ascension is to raise up each. It is to raise you, my Sisters, to a life like that

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of angels: it is to raise secular Christians to a life like yours: all in one way, all upward, all forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth to those before.

"Lift up your hearts!" Oh, how hard it is! Even now, when we are about to behold those Blessed Feet touch Mount Olivet for the last time, and rising, still rising, till a cloud receives Him from our sight, oh how hard to forget the little vexations and troubles of this world, and to rise with Him too! One is set on some earthly scheme: it weighs us down like lead; one has got interested in some earthly plan: it ties us as with a rope; one gives or takes some little offence: and instead of following the altogether Lovely, we worry and grovel about that. Oh if we could, (my Sisters, I include myself as much at least as you—) Oh, if we could but act out what we know! We talk of that better country: we profess to love, aye, and we do love that one and only LORD; and what then? Some miserable little thing comes across us: and we cleave to the dust at once. We intended to do a kind deed, and were mistaken: and we brood over that; we were treated unkindly, and we growl over that; we have worldly difficulties which we see not our way clearly from: and we are tied to them. And yet

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all the while He is ascending, Whom we desire to follow still, not now with our bodies, but with our souls. His Passion finished, His Crucifixion over, His Tomb burst, His ransomed secured. There are times, I know, when we all can feel how our own desire is to ascend with Him. We *are* to live with Him, are we not? That is to be the joy of joys. Why is it so different now? Why do we find the *Sursum Corda* so hard here, when we profess it to be the blessedness of blessednesses there? O my Sisters, as Dr. Donne used to say, "How much we must be changed before we *are* changed!" I look into my own heart; do you look into yours. How much of their natural eager unmortified feelings could we take into the presence of GOD? And yet, when we are there! no more misunderstandings among those who love each other: no more mistakes when we act for the best: no more sin to excuse in those around us, who are GOD'S servants;—knowing as we are known. Oh glorious Ascension, that has wrought all these things! that has exalted our flesh to the right hand of GOD: the poor sinful weak flesh, then made glorious beyond conception, pure as He is pure, strong as the House of David. "The House of David shall be as GOD, as the Angel of the LORD before them."

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"Before them!" Yes. First to rise from the dead: first to say, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" First to reverse the fiery sword that kept guard over Paradise, and to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

"The Angel of the LORD went before them." Yes: and oh that it may be so in every work we do for His sake! If we have to suffer for Him, oh how far is He before us! If we are grieved by those we love best, what was He? If we are tempted, what was His Lent? If we are weary, what were His journeyings? And when we come to die, what was His, "FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit?"

Well: and if it were asked of you, as it was of the disciples, "Why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?" what answer would you have to give?

"We followed Him to the Cross. He is not there, but in the grave. We followed Him to the grave; He is not there, but He is risen. We followed Him to the mountain in Galilee; He is not there, but at Olivet: we followed Him to Olivet, and there we have the joyful promise: 'This same JESUS, Which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in

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like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.'"

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON LIII.*

ZECHARIAH FULFILLED.

"*And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent* JESUS *two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto Me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The* LORD *hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*"—S. MATT. xxi. 1-5.

[FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 1859.]

AND so GOD has brought us, my Sisters, to the beginning of another year: the fifth that we have thus commenced together; we begin it under circumstances of discouragement and loss: fewer in number—for most of you it may be said, weaker in health, with more to do, and less strength to do it: and with less immediate

* The two following Sermons were accidentally omitted in their proper places, but may not unfitly come in at the close of this series, referring as they do to the writings of the Prophets, though their texts are drawn from other parts of Scripture.

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prospect of obtaining more. These things are in GOD'S hands, and ought not to frighten or perplex us: it must be so, as we pass through the desert of this world,—whether in ourselves or in others. Sometimes a bright gleam of sunshine,—sometimes a cloudy day,—sometimes a violent storm. But if we only are doing what our dear LORD did in the Gospel for the day, coming up to Jerusalem, all the rest matters very little. Clouds and storms some day will pass: the walls and towers of that city are bright with perpetual sunshine; wait only, and we must inherit it.

Now, I think you are all too well acquainted with the mystical meaning of this story to make it necessary for me to speak about that: how the ass was the type of the Jewish Church; the colt, on which never man yet sat, of the Gentiles, as yet unbound by any laws: how our LORD'S using both in His final entry into Jerusalem was a prophecy of the conversion of both to Himself before He shall, for the last time, ascend to the Heavenly Jerusalem when the Day of Judgment shall be over. It is rather in a sense more peculiar to you that I want to speak of the Gospel now.

Our LORD is coming into this world: and you have to meet Him. A world, the cage of every

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unclean bird; a world, the habitation of the strong man armed; a world that hates Him and His works. Well: and you take an example from those that welcomed Him into Jerusalem then.

And how? In the first place, by going forth: as they did. There is a whole life-long lesson in those two words. Going forth, from every thing which at present you fancy a defence, to Him Who is the only salvation, the only hiding-place: going forth from all earthly friendship and love, to Him Who is the Friend of sinners—of all sinners; but more especially and more dearly the Bridegroom of the elect souls, who more resolutely go out, leaving everything for His sake: going forth in the sight of men and angels, in the midst of an evil and adulterous generation that hates the truth, professing yourselves His, let who will say Nay; openly proclaiming that Him in His poverty and humility now you embrace,—Him, the Man of sorrows,—Him, the Man of shame,—Him, Whose ways are not the ways of men, nor His thoughts their thoughts: Him, whatever be the consequences to you: Him, let who may follow you and accompany you, let who may that began by accompanying you end by turning back.

Yes, dear Sisters: Advent is much more than a mere recollection, and a mere anticipation: it

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is a present profession. In Lent, the LORD stands and commands you to be brought to Him:—in Advent, you yourselves go out to meet Him. But, mark you: the thus going out, the thus offering yourselves, involves this duty also, that you do not discourage one another. Consider this, when you are tempted to speak—I will not say despairingly, but dishearteningly:—when you are ready to dwell on losses and disappointments and hindrances, and to say, "We never shall get on—we are going back instead of forward; we are losing numbers rather than gaining them." Whatever you may think, it is an act of high treason against faith in GOD—a sin against charity, too: because nothing is so easily propagated as doubt and mistrust. It will be of no avail that you profess to go forth with your Hosannas now, welcoming the King that is to come and reign over us, if you are doing what in you lies to make others timid, filling them with fear instead of with hope. What was it that, in the old dispensation, at once brought down the severest punishment, and bestowed the highest reward? What, but the different conduct of the ten and of the two spies, when the children of Israel were on the very borders of the land of Canaan? Listen; the one:

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"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan."

The other:

"If the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."

And now to look at the Gospel again. Of the multitude, some strewed their garments before the LORD: others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. It is a wonderful type. Those that laid their garments before the advancing King, what are they but the Martyrs, who so cheerfully laid aside the earthly vestments of their bodies, that so, by their destruction, the King of Martyrs might go forth conquering and to conquer? And those that cast the branches of olive and palm trees in the way, are such as for His sake give up all the

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happiness, all the beauty, all the advancement that this life has to offer them,—their very selves, though in another sense than that of the Martyrs, their life-long labours, their never-ending self-denial. This is what you profess to do, dear Sisters: look to it yourselves this Advent how far you are doing it. We have the longest space of preparation for Christmas this year which the Church ever gives us: try what use you can make of it. It happens not unmeetly that, at the beginning of this new year, we should enter on a new manner of existence: that we should lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes.* Only there can be no real spread, no real increase of strength, unless it first is in your own hearts; unless the love of GOD there spreads itself so as to cover one difficulty, one disobedience, one rebellious thought after another. S. Paul tells you so: "Hope maketh not ashamed:" why? "because the love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts." Not merely *shed*, but shed abroad. Because, being there, it does not merely confine itself to its first limits, but occupies more and wider room, throws down stronger and stronger obstacles. If it does not, either you cannot hope, if you are true to yourselves; or if you can shut your eyes to the real truth, and hope never-

* Referring to enlargement of the Orphanage, &c.

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theless, it will be a hope that *maketh* ashamed. And notice, what the multitude that went before and that followed, cried: for here, too, is a deep mystery. It seems to have consisted of four parts. "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD: Blessed be the King of Israel that cometh in the Name of the LORD: Hosanna in the Highest." The multitude that went before—the people of the Jews, so long suffering from a yoke that neither their fathers nor they were able to bear—might well say, "Save now, we beseech Thee," as they saw the Infant King that was to deliver them born in Bethlehem. Then the multitude of the Gentiles that followed after, that received Him when He was already manifested, hail Him by the dearest of titles: "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD," in that Name, JESUS, which was to heal all sorrows, cure all sicknesses, end all sins, wipe away all tears! Then the Jews again, referring to Him as their own more especial Monarch—"Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh on the throne of His father David:" and then the Gentiles, looking forward to the second Advent of the same LORD—when the deliverance should not be partial, but entire, not for a time, but for everlasting—end all with their "Hosanna in the Highest." Hosanna was

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fitly enough said, when He came, as in Bethlehem, with great humility—Hosanna in the highest fits the time when He shall come with the multitudes of His Angels and Saints, to abolish all wrong for ever, and to open a way into the Holy of Holies for all His people.

I always think that the entry of our LORD into Jerusalem, is the fittest opening of this season of Advent. It is not the ordinary one; it is common to the Salisbury books, and to a few German ones, but to none else.*

But taken in this sense, as the type of His two Advents, it is no less an allegory than an event, no less a prophecy than a history. And the whole end and aim of the season is to tell you how to go out to meet Him. This is the end and aim of all that I could desire to teach you; that that cry should be always, as S. Jerome says, sounding in our ears, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" He comes in a thousand other ways than by death. In every change and chance of human life He comes to us: because He allows us to meet it and to undergo it, only for this end, that His grace may be more abundantly bestowed upon us. Therefore, dearest Sisters, our present state of disappointment and discouragement is the Bridegroom's coming: He wills to

* He speaks here only of comparatively late Uses.

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try us in the way in which He was tried Himself. "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." And His question to you now is, what it was to those that remained with Him then, "Will ye also go away?" Think of this: our future success, our numbers, our increase, will be according as He sees that we use, or do not use, the blessings He gives us—do, or not do, the tasks that lie before us. Now, serve Him with all your efforts this Advent; and trust in His mercy to lift us up again, and again give us outward increase and visible success. But above all things, this is the great lesson: that, if through the weakness of our mortal nature, we are ever depressed, we should try, instead of imparting our depression to others, to keep it entirely to ourselves. To me, dear Sisters, you have a right to speak of your discouragements; to each other you have not. Mark what our LORD's own words were: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say?" He, speaking as man, felt at a loss what to say in His earthly sorrows; but He in that, as well as in all things, left us a pattern. "Father, glorify Thy Name." And if we could hear that answer, "I have both glorified It, and will glorify It again," how it would sometimes surprise us! how we should be taught that events, which we in our

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poor little faith looked on as altogether against us, were, notwithstanding all, to lead to GOD'S glory and our benefit.

And so then, my Sisters, this Advent, go forth bravely to meet Him. He comes to see what you are doing for Him: He comes to be a spectator now of that of which He is to be the Rewarder hereafter: "the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." And GOD grant that it may be said of you, "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps!" The best of you need to trim them; the best of you would be sorry if the Advent of Advents, that of Death, were now to come upon you, while they were burning no more brightly. See to that then; and let us try, putting our trust in GOD, to use His own ordinance of Confession as often as we can, during this most holy season.

Pray all of you, that, beginning as it does, heavily and gloomily, this Advent may end for all of you most blessedly: that they that sow in tears may reap in joy; that if we feel disposed to begin it with *De Profundis*, we may have every reason to conclude it with *Gloria in Excelsis*.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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SERMON LIV.

THE POOR.

"For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.—DEUT. XV. 11.

[1857.]

IT would be worth while, dear Sisters, to trace all those passages in the Psalms and in the Prophecies where our dear LORD, He "by Whom all things were made, and without Whom was not anything made that was made," He, Who is worthy to receive riches, as well as blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, is spoken of as The Poor. "Ye know the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor:" and David in the spirit of prophecy knew it too, so constantly does he use that word, so lovingly does he introduce it. "As for you, ye have made a mock at the counsel of the poor,"

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—those Scribes and Pharisees, who laughed to scorn that counsel of the SON of GOD, by death to destroy death. "Because of the deep sighing of the poor," (And, oh what a deep sighing was that, when JESUS cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost!) "I will up, saith the LORD." "The poor shall not alway be forgotten." Three days He might lie in darkness, as the men that have been long dead; but the three days passed, and the Easter Day of everlasting remembrance followed. "The poor committeth himself unto Thee:" and what is that but, "FATHER, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit?" I might go on endlessly to shew you how the title is given to the Man of sorrows in the Psalms: let us rather now see how it fits Him here. "The poor shall never cease out of the land."

And first, dear Sisters, one naturally calls to mind the poor appearance under which the Poor King presents Himself to us now: not with gold, or pearls, or costly array, but under the form of Bread and Wine. And what blessing or thanks are equal to that loving mercy, my Sisters, that thus the Poor shall never cease out of our land? That on this very day, young as it is, He has been sacrificed on a thousand altars; or is even now, as with us, about to be

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sacrificed: that thousands of faithful people are about to receive Him Who is broken, and never divided: eaten, and never consumed. If He thus were to cease! If the fountain of His goodness were to be dried up, if that heavenly manna were to fall no longer, what would become of us, hard pressed as we are, scarcely able with all our efforts to conquer, having to exert all our strength, and to use all our helps, and finding both barely enough! And think, then, what has been that never-failing, never-diminishing storehouse of GOD'S goodness, from the Day of Pentecost till now! Not one day, since then, that the Son of Man, exalted into the heavens, has not given us His Flesh to eat; not one day that His people have looked to Him, and been disappointed. "These wait all upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. When Thou givest it them, they gather it: Thou openest Thine hand, and they are filled with good." Yes: most truly in this sense, the Poor shall never cease out of your land.

But that is not the closest or the most immediate bearing on the subject. The Poor: He That was so poor as to find no room in the inn; so poor, as to have no cradle but the manger: as to dwell, and that out of charity,

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in poor and mean cottages all His life; so poor as to have for His dying bed only the hard narrow plank of the Cross; He, in His own Person, has long since entered into the heavenly Palace; into the City whose foundations are of pure gold, as it were transparent glass, whose twelve gates are each a several pearl. But yet, every afflicted soul, every one that is tried, and tried sorely by the assaults of Satan—every sufferer, every struggler, every runner in the race,—for these are all poor—are poor especially His: He lives in and by them: we can serve Him in them; we can honour Him in them; they are the symbols and outward appearance under which He manifests Himself to us. To see your dear LORD in every poor man, in every suffering form, in every manner, —it is almost a part of your Rule:—in every wound to see a type of the five unconquerable Wounds, once the marks of infirmity and corruption, now the pole-stars of our hope: in every tear to see those precious tears which fell in the Garden of Gethsemane, the richest seed with which any garden was ever sown—it is a Sister's work.

And, depend upon it, "The poor shall never cease out of your land." There will be work enough and to spare. Many and many a tear, I

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hope, to be wiped from many and many an eye, before your own tears are for ever wiped away: many and many a fear for you to soothe, before your own last fear, the fear of death, can itself be utterly abolished. Oh how He would have us remember Him, that LORD Whom we love! On how many earthly objects has this glorious King stamped His likeness, that we might see Him and worship Him there! Not objects of glory and beauty alone: He is not only the Sun of Righteousness, the Star of the Sea, the Dew that comes down on the mown grass, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valley: but He symbolizes Himself in the poor, the sick, the weak, the infirm: He, Whose visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; He, in Whom, when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him: He, Who was sick to the death on the Cross for our sakes; He, of Whom Pilate marvelled if He were already dead.

"Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother." It is a dear commandment, a sweet name, as it stands. But, my Sisters, to you is not the injunction yet dearer, is not the title yet sweeter? I know very well that the Bride in the Canticles calls Him her Brother too, by reason of

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the virtue of His Incarnation; by reason that He is bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh; by reason that He is not ashamed to call us brethren. But Husband, my Sisters, is a dearer title still; and in such a title it is that He asks for your love, for your heart, for everything you think, or say, or do. Open your hand widely to Him; but oh, beyond that, far far beyond, open your hearts. And how? Open them to Him, in letting Him know all their troubles, all their infirmities, all their backslidings, all their shortcomings. He will not despise you nor reject you for them: He is not wont so to cast away His own. There may be great, deep, shameful falls, where yet there is true love; how much more the daily falls of those who are trying hardest and fighting braveliest? And then again: open them to take Him in! And if you open them to Him, that implies the shutting them to everything else. There is not room for Him and for another. He comes, dearest Sisters, sometimes, and He finds some evil temper, that will not give Him admittance; some habit of self-indulgence, some coldness, some negligence; and so once more that is fulfilled: "He came unto His Own, and His Own received Him not." Is it to be so with any of you this morning, my Sisters?

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When in His Flesh and Blood, when in His Soul and Divinity, He presents Himself to each of you,—and I can only see the kneeling form and the outstretched hands, the cross that hallows the breast, and the dress that marks the Bride,—will He see, at that moment, any one heart that is not wholly and entirely His? Will He see any one thought unworthy of the temple into which the LORD of Hosts is coming? "The LORD, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant Whom ye delight in." And the LORD Who seeks you, as He comes to each of you, says, "The LORD hath chosen that Sion to Himself; He hath longed for her. This shall be my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein." O dear Sisters, is that most loving and gracious LORD to be rejected? Coming to His own Home, to be received coldly? Making His entrance into His temple, to have to say, "Take these things hence?" No: I will not believe it. I would not for all the world lose that deep, deep joy which I have when passing from one to another with the Body that was nailed to the Cross, and the Blood that gushed forth from the wells of salvation opened by the nails. Happy times to me, indeed! for they seem to

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bring me very near to GOD! With whatever earnestness and love you have come before, oh that it may be increased tenfold at this holy season, tenfold increased and tenfold rewarded!

And now, see how affectionately it continues: "Thou shalt open thy hand unto thy brother, to *thy* poor and to *thy* needy." For here it is as though His love made itself lower than we, that we might have the means of relieving it; that we have an interest, and a dear one, too, in His poverty, in His infirmities; that He has needs which He looks to us to supply. See how, while hanging on the Cross, He spoke of His need. "I thirst"—not for the vessel that was set by Him, but for the salvation of human souls: how He needed tender care for His Blessed Mother, and asked for it; how He needed compassion: "I looked for some to have pity on Me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort Me." Yes, dearest Sisters, He is your Poor, your Needy still. He needs what you only can give Him—for He will not take it by force—your love: He needs the pearl of great price in His sight—your hearts.

O marvellous exchange! That He should offer to you that precious heart, the source and wellspring of all pity and compassion; the

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heart pierced with so many sorrows; the heart that at length, literally, and by no figure of speech, *burst* with its agony; and should ask for yours instead! Poor, unstable, unloving, vacillating hearts! are they worth His acceptance at their best? Yet offer them to Him, my Sisters. They are what *your* Poor, what *your* Needy requires. Grieve you may that they are no fitter for Him: but if they are only on fire with His love, it suffices. And notice how the command is worded: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land."

And why? Because the Poor and Needy, then King of kings and LORD of lords, then the great High Priest Who has passed into the Heavens, then the Conqueror, glorious in His apparel, will one day open His Hand wide to you in *His* Land! O wonderful difference between that which you have given, and that which He will bestow! between your country and His! between your hand, so often sluggish in doing His work, so often ready to be removed from the plough; and His, marked with the print of the Nail, the bridal token of His betrothal to you: His Hand, so full of blessings, His Hand that is to support your head in the deep, deep repose of consummated love! The

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poor and needy never ceased out of your land, here. Will that eternal LORD ever cease out of His own Land, there? Will He ever cease to be its heavenliness? Will he ever fail to afford Himself as the Beatific Vision?

O my Sisters, remember this. Indeed, indeed, these hands of yours are consecrated to Him: not only by so often handling His most precious Body, but by being pledged to His especial work. Do not—but you will not—do it grudgingly! Do not—but you will not—do it untruthfully: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." And then His Hand shall be mightily stretched forth for you, when, in the passage of the Jordan, the waters come in even unto your soul. His Hand shall gloriously crown you with the diadem that concludes the struggle,—His Hand shall wipe away the last earthly tear from the eyes that see the King in His Beauty,—His Hand shall clasp you in the perfect embrace of His unchanging and eternal Love!

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

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APPENDIX.

[FROM some of Dr. Neale's Sermons, left unfinished, or too hastily written, etc., to be suitable for publication, the Editors have extracted in his own words, a few notes, or suggestions for meditation. They follow here.]

NOTES OF SERMONS.

1.

[AT RECEPTION OF SISTERS.]

I.—GEN. xxiv. 13, 14.

"Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."

"Let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for my master."

Let this Thy servant be she that Thou hast

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appointed for my Master, the true Isaac, true Joy of heaven and earth: that, during her probation shall continually strive

To love Him more,

To serve Him better,

To deny herself more thoroughly:

And, after this, that shall be taken into His Tent for the rest of her mortal life:

and finally have her portion with the hundred and forty and four thousand in the House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The sign pointing out Rebekah as chosen for Isaac: her doing her work whole-heartedly.

This, a chief duty of every Sister.

On her doing, or leaving undone, or imperfectly done, one little action, turned the whole of Rebekah's future life.

No work so small that the right performance of it may not be all-important.

"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy LORD."

"Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

Nothing little in this life.

"Glory be to GOD for all things."

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2.

II.—GEN. xxiv. 63-65.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself."

I.—Isaac meets his bride at the time of prayer.

When did our True Isaac go forth to pray or meditate, at evening-tide?

from the seat of unrighteous judgment:
from Golgotha:
from the city wept over.

Where?

On the Cross, He lifted up His hands to be the evening Sacrifice of the world.

To pray for whom?

For others: "FATHER, forgive them:"
for Himself: "FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit."

To meditate on what?

On the poor thief's miserable estate:
and remembering, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy,"

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He said, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

On the generations to come: the salvation that should be wrought in the righteous by His merits, the damnation that should befall the wicked by their own deserts; and ardently desiring one, and deploring the other, He said, "I thirst."

Or: He came forth: from the womb of Mary;
to walk: in the field of the world;
to meditate: for thirty years on His great work; when

"He came, the Bridegroom of the Bride,
As drew the world to evening-tide."

II.—"What Man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?"

"It is my Master." "A Man full of all pity, tenderness, compassion, long-suffering: and that Man, Almighty God." (S. Bernard.)

"What Man is this?"

He to Whom those nearest Him in His kingdom gave themselves most fully in the time of their pilgrimage.

He Whose Cross you are about to assume:

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Whose dress you will presently put on:
Whose Body and Blood you are about to receive as a pledge of your own hearty sincerity.

III.—"And when she saw Isaac, she lighted off her camel."

For those earnestly embracing a Sister's life, an end of the convenience and ease of former days.

The rest of the journey must be made on foot.

Henceforth, the guilt of every sin is marvellously deepened:

efforts are necessary which were not so before:

every fall is a very different thing from former falls.

Yet: "It is my Master;" "My grace is sufficient for thee:" "My FATHER, Which gave them Me, is greater than I; and no man is able to pluck them out of My FATHER'S Hand."

Matter for watchfulness, prayer, struggle: not for fear.

"I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh."

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Love turns the confession into a sweet savour.

Or, in another sense:

"She lighted off her camel"=Humility:

A Sister has everything to make her humble: her very dress pledging her to so much, and she does so little: giving so much occasion to blaspheme, by any fall, and yet—"My feet had well-nigh gone, my treadings had almost slipped:"—vowed to such perfect obedience, and yet so often disobedient.

IV.—"She took a veil, and covered herself."

The mark of the Bride, separating her from more external followers, among whom she has hitherto companied,

to be brought into the Bridegroom's tent now, and, if she persevere, into His Palace hereafter.

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8.

III.—GEN. xxiv. 67.

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

General sense of the story:

Isaac=our LORD,

comforted for loss of His mother, the Synagogue,

by betrothal to His bride, the Church.

Eliezer=apostles and missionaries.

tarrying at the well=Baptism.

Rebekah giving drink plenteously=the Bride refreshing their spirits by pouring forth abundance of faith.

adorned by the servant with the master's gifts=the Church beautified by the graces bestowed by her LORD through His servants.

But more particularly, for this occasion:

"Wilt thou go with this Man?

And she said, I will go."

Consider the treachery of entering on this life without fully intending to be our LORD'S own to the end.

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Pray for grace to go from strength to strength.

"And she became His wife, and He loved her."

This, the sum of the history of many an elect soul, even in this life: and what in the next?

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

Ah! if she only have done so!

If none may then be wanting of the many maidens gathered together to Shushan the palace!

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4.

IV.—Exodus xv. 25.

"And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them."

A Sister's life here set forth:
in its outward troubles,
and in their only cure:
both taken together, the proof of its reality.

"Waters of Marah:"=external difficulties,
inward struggles,
hard weary work,
nights of watching,
days of fatigue,
besetting sins.

The heart knoweth its own Marah=bitterness.

"The Lord shewed him a tree."

The Lord must needs shew, or none could find.

When and how?

In one sense, on Calvary, to all the world.
To Sisters, in a nearer and dearer way,
by their own daily crucifixion of will;
A weight continually pressing:
but yet how dear a privilege!

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For thus only can we be like Him Whose Name we bear.

"He pleased not Himself."

Therefore be of good courage: no way but that of self-denial could be like His.

Only: let it be real; not a sham: doing; not talking.

"Which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet."

Compare this with Elisha's miracle.

In that, the wood sank, and the axe-head swam: in this, the waters themselves were sweetened.

The double lesson: the Cross our one atonement,

Our one comfort.

Elisha's waters (Jordan)=sin.

The axe-head=human nature, overwhelmed with floods of sin: cold, dull, heavy as iron.

Wood=the Cross of Him Who was made sin for us.

Cast in=He plunged, as it were, into the transgressions of man.

("I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over Me.")

The wood sank, the iron floated, and was returned to its true master=He sank, man rose, and returned to his GOD.

But here, the Cross is to turn sorrow into joy.

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Consider the sorrow of that place where it was first set up:

His, Who says, "Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow!"

Hers, whose heart was pierced so bitterly with the sword:

Hers, the chief of penitents, who grieved for His agony and for her own sin.

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

What a harvest of comfort to the whole world, from that one place!

The sorrow, on one side, we all must have: the consolation, on the other, we all must seek.

"There He made him a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them."

The statute and ordinance, in your case, the Religious Life, with its sorrows and its comforts.

And its whole course carries out this proof of you.

You all have, or have had, much to discourage.

You all have had, and have, that GOD in Whose strength you may laugh at all discouragements.

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5.

V.—DEUT. xxviii. 10.

"And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the Name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee."

"All people shall *see* that thou," etc.

Easy to cause others to *hear* of professions of religion:

of religious life and dedication to GOD,

but how about their *seeing* it?

in your lives,

in your outward actions and demeanour?

This dedication must be all, or nothing:

a miserable folly and sham, unless the whole heart and soul is in it.

Henceforth, to have no way or will of your own,

no love but that one love,

no fear but that of being parted from Him.

"All people of the earth:" earthly passions and evil spirits;

no calculating how a few weak women may carry terror into the empire of Satan.

Judith xvi. 25.

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You may be feared more than you can fear.
A constant battle: no discharge in that war.
Still, if faint, be yet pursuing:
If there are, in this land for which you are to fight, the seven nations of the deadly sins, and the Anakims of great temptations, there are also milk and honey, and the clusters of the True Vine.
Be strong and of a good courage, and the LORD thy GOD shall be with thee whithersoever thou goest.

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6.

VI—JUDGES i. 15.

"And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs."

A marriage: with one who obtained his bride by storming a hostile city.

a petition previously granted by a father:

a higher petition now asked and bestowed.

"A south land:" peculiarly valuable from its position:

still more so, if enriched by this new gift.

"Upper and nether springs:" in nature, the upper springs are fed by the lower (when connected with each other, at the top and bottom of a hill): so also in grace.

"Nether springs:" the grace which is invisible, —obedience, purity, self-denial, endurance;

"Upper springs:" the grace of bearing the Cross and glorifying GOD before men; which outer grace must be fostered by the inner.

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"And Caleb *gave* her the upper springs, and the nether springs." Amen!

Othniel, before winning Achsah, had reconquered a city which the Canaanites had wrested from Israel: our LORD, on the Cross, regained a world that once had been His own.

Othniel, after winning Achsah, protected her by the same courage. "And the land had rest forty years." The Right Hand which dashed in pieces the enemy, is doubly pledged to the support of the chosen bride: elected by her LORD to especial love and nearness; singled out by Satan for especial hatred and assault.

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7.

VII.—Ruth ii. 8, 9.

"Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Ruth had worked in the field before:
but not at the especial invitation of the Master.
Now comes the invitation:
which ends in the happy bridal.
Gleaning. So we, in the evening of the world, do but glean after those who bore the burden and heat of the day.
Partly entering into their labours:
partly carrying them on:
partly gleaning where they reaped.
"Abide here by My maidens:" a multitude of holy virgins whom no man can number, from Apostolic times to the present day: flowers growing in this world nigh the place where He was crucified: transplanted in the next to a fadeless Eden.

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"Go not to glean in another field;"

1. No man can serve two masters. Give thyself wholly to thy Master's service.

2. Seek no other work than He sets thee.

"Go thou after *them*," thy glorious examples,

to pain,

to labour. Go and do thou likewise.

But what, *some* day?

They went not *only* to that.

In the hour of death,

Go thou after *them*.

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8.

VIII.—JUDITH x. 19.

"Who would despise this people, that have among them such women?"

"Who would despise this people," this great Church?

elect, peculiar, beloved of GOD: 1 S. Pet. ii. 9.

countless: Num. xxiii. 10.

secure: Isa. xl. 2.

beautiful and glorious: Rev. xxi.

valiant: Nahum ii. 3 *f*.

"that have among them such women."

Mary, turning Eva into Ave, began to elevate all womankind.

But compare S. Paul's cautious sowing of the seed of the evangelical counsels (1 Cor. vii.) with the great tree of the Religious Life which has since sprung up.

Martyrs,

Confessors,

Sisters, contemplative and active,

Those who have left no name on earth, a multitude that cannot be numbered.

"The Lord chose new wars." (Judg. v. 8, Vulg.) Let our new Sister fight His battles well.

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9.

IX.—Acts iv. 36, 37; v. 1, 2.

"And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles' feet."

Contrast between S. Barnabas and Ananias:

one sold all he had, and gave all he had to God.

the other sold all, kept back part, and brought the rest, declaring it to be the whole.

The great question for a Sister:

whether at her first reception,

or looking back upon it for renewal of vows,

is, or was, the offering of herself made in the spirit of S. Barnabas or of Ananias?

In that of Ananias:

if any piece of self-will reserved,

any favourite piece of self-indulgence,

any resolution to withhold obedience,

no matter in how trifling a matter.

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Poverty, chastity, obedience:
a glorious gift, if given whole:
a miserable sham, if given half.

Another lesson from S. Barnabas:

He is not mentioned in Scripture by name (Son of Consolation), till we hear of this act of oblation.

We must suffer, if we would console.

The Father of mercies, and GOD of all consolation,
because
a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

This is your chief vocation, and the noblest that can be:
To suffer:
not, *perhaps*, bodily pain; but
fatigue,
fruitless efforts,
resistance to fierce temptations.

But then, to think of the Captain of our Salvation, *made perfect* through suffering:

The Co-eternal Word, so far as He was Man, needing perfection: capable of being perfected in no other way.

The original elements of His Sacramental Body and Blood tell us as much:
Bread: cut down in the ear:

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ground by slow torture of the mill:
baked by long agony of the fire.
Wine: expressed by the press which is
the type of sharpest suffering:
and then, the one, changed into that Body
which for us bore the scourge, the crown of
thorns, the nails, the Cross:
the other, into the Blood for us poured out in
the Agony on the Pavement, on Calvary.
Eve sought to be like God by knowledge.
You have a better path: by suffering:
But so learn to suffer, as also to help,
so to labour, as also to sympathize,
so to make oblation, as the very Sisters
of consolation.
And your light affliction, which is but for a
moment, shall work for you a far more
exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

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10.

NOTES OF SERMONS PREACHED IN LENT.

I.—S. Luke xviii. 31.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem."

This text the Antiphon of Lent,
the keynote of all its precepts.
Every word is, so to speak, a separate clause.
"We." It has a double force for you.
We, who have made such a profession,
who call ourselves nearest to the Man of sorrows,
who daily set forth His Death,
who daily are renewed with His Life,
who, unless of all we keep closest to Him, are of all most miserable:
"Behold, *we* go up to Jerusalem,"
uniting ourselves with our Sisters throughout the world.
"Go." True in two senses: of entering on the long journey through the terrible wil-

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derness, so weary and waste, but where, save by your own fault, you shall eat Angels' food: and of progress towards the true Jerusalem, which it must be your life's work to attain: if faint, yet pursuing.

"I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the LORD.

"Our feet *shall* stand in Thy gates, O Jerusalem."

"Up." The hardness of the journey.

Take courage in the example of our LORD,

and of His Saints.

See what can be done more than at other times for Him Whose first Lent was glorious with threefold victory.

He consulted not with flesh and blood, when He then went forth.

Neither must you.

If He overcame the lust of the flesh, refusing to make stones bread, you must offer Him in return the myrrh of self-denial.

If He overthrew the pride of life by rejecting false glory, bring Him in return the frankincense of true praise.

If He crushed the lust of the eyes, refusing the glory of the world, bring Him in return the most precious gold of charity.

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And one piece of up-hill work is, the doing all duties thoroughly.

Remember: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully."

The temptation to be content with doing work *anyhow*, is most difficult to detect in one's self.

A struggle against that, would be a going *up* to Jerusalem.

"To." It must be *up to*, or *down from*.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem, and fell among thieves.

This thought should thrust away every weight, and the sin that so easily besets you.

Our LORD not only went up, but pressed on before His disciples, straitened till His Baptism was accomplished.

His disciples feared indeed as they followed: still they did follow.

Can a Sister go the other way?

What if, instead of joining in the Feast of Palms when your LORD enters Jerusalem, you, spoiled by the thieves, must cry to the Good Samaritan to come and help you?

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem:" Not as yet to our own dear Home.

Here is but the way.

We are going *towards* it: not as yet *to* it:

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but to that earthly Jerusalem whose silver is become dross,

whose wine is mingled with water,

over which those bitter tears were shed,

where the Chief Priests and Pharisees shall take counsel against the Lord of Life,

which shall echo with the cry, "Not this Man, but Barabbas."

One word still left: the first.

"Behold." The essence of a Sisterhood gives force to the word.

The fact of your existence calls attention to your aim.

Dress, cross, ring, house, all say for you, "Behold, we go up."

Is it a greater privilege, or a greater danger?

A greater privilege, that you may so honour?

Or a greater danger, that you may so dishonour?

Between such hopes and fears, to what pitch of holiness ought not every Sister to be led?

Any head that may turn to look at you as you pass ought to be a warning of the fearful power your profession gives to Satan, if once he draws you into a serious fall.

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And this he can hardly do, unless you have been allowing yourselves in slight falls.

Then, take the words in their most glorious sense, as spoken by the new friends who shall meet the happy soul released from earth,

whose warfare is accomplished,
whose iniquity is pardoned.

'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem: and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished."

All things: the Throne as well as the Cross, the eternal victory as well as the temporal conflict.

All things: and this not the least: "If we suffer, we shall reign with Him;"

And this: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be."

And this, dearest of all: "FATHER, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am."

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II.

II.—S. MATT. xiii. 33.

"Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

In the seven parables of this chapter, a beautiful arrangement and balance.

The first, (the sower,)—general explanation of all.

The second, (the tares,) answers to the seventh (the draw-net): shewing that in the Christian Church good and bad must co-exist.

The third, (the mustard-seed,) answers to the fourth (the leaven): one; shewing the Church spreading through the world; the other, shewing corruption spreading through the Church.

The fifth, (the hidden treasure,) answers to the sixth (the pearl): one, shewing the LORD'S joy in finding the sinner; the other, the sinner's joy in finding the LORD.

The three measures of meal=the Church, or the heart of each Christian.

Leaven=corruption of doctrine, or of life.

Woman=besetting sin.

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The whole being leavened=the miserable end.

"Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Leaven—the worst of sin: being the corruption of that which is excellent.

The business of Lent is, to learn how to "purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump."

"Three measures." As we are bound to glorify GOD with our body, soul, and spirit, so the three temptations, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are addressed each to each.

The lust of the flesh, to the body:
The lust of the eyes, to the soul:
The pride of life, to the spirit.

As Jeremiah: "A lion out of the forest shall slay them:"—the most deadly, destructive temptations, the lust of the flesh:

"a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them:"—the lust of the eyes, arising from the understanding; not in itself so fatal, or involving such total darkness:

"a leopard shall watch over their cities:"—the pride of life; a desire to serve GOD and mammon: a mistaken wish to serve GOD:

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represented by the most lovely of wild beasts, and one that attacks by day.

The leaven is hid in the heart: "an enemy hath done this:" and left to ferment.

Now is the time to see how far the corruption has spread:

first, by real, true, regular self-examination, so easy to insist on, so difficult to practise;

secondly, by careful, painstaking, outspoken confession.

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12.

III.—2 Cor. vi. 1, 3-7.

"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

The duty set forth first: that *we* are to approve ourselves as ministers of God.

Then, the way to do so.

The fast of forty days has its own number here: our duties at this time are summed up in forty clauses: and the forty clauses are divided into four sets.

The first set has two clauses, like that of Isaiah, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well."

"Giving no offence in anything:" "in all things approving ourselves."

including duty to man, and duty to God.

"Approving ourselves:" How? In ten ways: and all of them, for the present, not joyous, but grievous.

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"In much patience:" with others, and with yourselves;

"in afflictions:" positive sufferings from without;

"in necessities:" negative sufferings from without;

"in distresses:" sufferings from within;

"in stripes:" sharp sudden anguish of body or mind;

"in imprisonments:" the being shut out from work you desire to do for your LORD;

"in tumults:" strife of tongues, without; the flesh striving against the spirit, within;

"in labours, in watchings, in fastings," } how could your probable work for CHRIST be expressed better than in these three words?

But they must be practised *now*.

Labours: by doing little unpleasant things;
stopping little habits of self-indulgence;
not allowing a slight sense of fatigue to keep you from GOD's service.

Watchings: if not able to do more, at least, like David,
at midnight to rise and give thanks to GOD;
to remember Him on your bed,
and think of Him when waking.

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Fastings: Do this as to our LORD:
Be real and earnest in it;
and it can never lose its reward.

The third head: how we are to approve ourselves the ministers of GOD.

Ten clauses:

"By pureness;" here, as usually, the first grace mentioned, because anything that injures that saps the very root of Christian life:

"by knowledge:" that this comes second, shows how constantly we need make prayer to the HOLY GHOST, Who is the Giver of all wisdom as well as of all holiness. "What GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"by long-suffering, by kindness." — Here, as always, the passive virtue before the active: the bearing, before the doing.

"by the HOLY GHOST:" by personal holiness: but as that holiness is His immediate gift, the Artificer is named instead of His work.

"by love unfeigned:" love to CHRIST's members must be shewn because of love to CHRIST:
the work of CHRIST must be done to CHRIST.

"by the word of truth:" what we profess, we must be seen to do:

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we cannot help others, unless we are resolute with ourselves;

service abroad is grounded on service at home.

"by the power of GOD:" by our own power, who could hope to win this race?

But what is the greatest difficulty, compared with the excellency of the power of GOD?

(Here the manuscript sermon ends.)

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13.

MISCELLANEOUS.

GEN. xxxi. 38-40.

"This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes."

"These twenty years."

No need to know or guess the length of time that you may have to work for CHRIST.

This, all in all, that you *be* with Him:

by taking part in the war continually going on in your own heart;

in the so frequent reception of His Body and Blood:

by ministering to Him in His poor.

"Thy ewes," etc.

Then, your duties as followers of the Good Shepherd, of which the first are carefulness, and gentleness.

"Thus I was," etc.

The Bridegroom's pattern for your imitation.

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What night?

In a lower sense, the nights spent in prayer on the mountain.

But chiefly, that night much to be remembered, in which He was betrayed: the very coldness and deadness of love;

that night too, of all hopelessness and despair, when it was—"we trusted that it *had* been—"

What day?

That, when sitting on the well, He was athirst, and in return for water, first clearly proclaimed Himself the CHRIST;

or that, when at the sixth hour, He cried, "I thirst."

And when did the sleep depart from His eyes?

Often, in nights of intercession.

Again, when in the fourth watch of the night He came to His disciples, walking on the sea:

and when they woke Him in the ship because of the storm.

Many of you know more or less of these sufferings: especially of the last: "My sleep departed from mine eyes."

Consider how many a Sister in past time has thus laboured and suffered, and then entered into rest.

And think of yourselves: as following,

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Not the Bridegroom of Virgins, alone:
not the Virgin Mother, alone:
but the virgins that be her fellows, and that with joy and gladness shall be brought, and shall enter into the King's palace with her.

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14.

NUMBERS ix. 22.

"Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed."

Consider the abiding sense of GOD'S Presence which the cloudy pillar must have given: the cool still shadow in the burning noon: the kindling glow at nightfall.

And how continual was the watchfulness it required from those whose movements it ruled.

In one sense, our cloudy pillar never departs from *our* tabernacle.

The Man That is a shadow from the heat by day, and the burning of a shining fire by night, ever abides with us under the form of Bread and Wine.

All your own, real, earnest, Sister's life, comes from that.

What progress you are making, you make from that.

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The Israelites were guided unerringly.

But were they guided always at the same rate of progress?

Then, learn to be patient with each other: and to be patient with yourselves.

Nothing more wonderful than the slowness of GOD'S ordinary work, when He works by man, as contrasted with the instantaneous working of His Omnipotence in creation or miracle.

"Ye have need of patience, that, *after* ye have done the will of GOD, ye might receive the promise."

Yet those who, in the struggle against sin, are truly trying their best, must succeed, however insensible to themselves their advance may be.

(But no outward success in work, etc., can make up for any allowed sin in the heart.)

Again: be content to wait GOD'S time,

not only for success,

but for the very opportunity of success.

"With good advice make war."

Compare two things:

Ahab, and in a righteous cause, was bidden, "Go up and prosper."

By whom? By the priests of Baal.

And we know the end.

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David, and in a righteous cause, was bidden not to attack: that is, not at once: not till he perceived GOD's appointed sign, "the sound of a going in the mulberry trees."

And what was the result?

Patience under inaction may be the greatest bravery.

Passive holding back is infinitely harder than active springing forward.

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15.

JUDGES i. 1, 2.

"Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand."

In Old Testament types, our LORD's love and grace being so infinite, two likenesses in one story are sometimes required, to teach of Him.

So with the two goats in the Day of Atonement: on one the LORD's lot fell, and it was immediately sacrificed; on the other, the scapegoat, all the sins of the children of Israel were laid; both equally types of Him Who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, and of Him Who bare those sins in His own Body on the Tree.

So, in the story of Abraham and Isaac: we see Him in the son who bare the wood up Mount Moriah, and was himself the destined lamb: but also in the ram caught in the thicket by his horns, we see Him,

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the first virtual act of Whose Passion was the assuming the Crown of Thorns.

So here, two characters of our LORD: one regarding His Passion and consequent Victory: the other, His Ascension and consequent Intercession.

Our Joshua died at the very moment He won Canaan for us.

Did His Death conclude the battle, on His part or ours? You know better.

Our Jacob had to labour seven years for His Rachel: in the three years and a half here, He performed half His work; that of suffering: then followed the other half, which He is ever carrying on, that of intercession.

"Who shall go up for us?"

He ascended *for us*, no less than He died *for us*.

"Who shall go up for us first?"

He Who is Alpha as well as Omega, the First as well as the Last: that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

And why does He go up for us? "Against the Canaanites."

What Canaanites can there be in that spiritual Temple whither He is gone, when of the earthly temple it was said, "The Cana-

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anite shall not enter into My House for ever?"

What fighting can there be in that Jerusalem, which is the Vision of peace?

It is so, though, thank GOD.

If we one with Him, He also One with us.

Moses fought as true a battle on the mount, as Joshua in the valley.

He stretches out His Hands still, but now they need not to be held out by the beam of the Cross.

How lovely and how sad in this sense: "Unto *Israel* He saith, I have stretched out My Hands all the day long unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

"And the LORD said, Judah shall go up."

The battle on the Cross was fought and won by our Joshua alone;

But now it is as the Head of His servants that He goes up.

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise."

But Judah is not a person only, but a tribe.

He goes up to fight, by His intercession, on the mountain; the rest of us are still left here, to fight hard for Him, as well as for ourselves, in the valley.

Then, if all His true servants may be called the

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tribe of His Judah [those most, who are most closely bound to Him]. And still GOD's answer holds good:

"Judah shall go up first."

First, then, to whatever fatigue, or danger, or temptation.

First, let us hope, to victory.

If so, first, we know, in the land of peace and plenty and repose.

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18.

1 SAMUEL xxii. 23.

"Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

David spake the words to Abiathar: the True David still speaks them to us.

Take the last clause first: "With me thou shalt be in safeguard."

But David was hunted day and night by his enemies. See his history at this time.

The True David says it to you: and there are worse dangers than those, in the path by which He leads you.

Nothing more dangerous than the Religious Life:

Dangerous, because it promises to perform so much;

More dangerous, because it has such great helps;

Most dangerous, because Satan aims at it his fiercest attacks.

It gives fearful importance to comparatively trifling sins; a fall there dishonours beyond other falls Him to Whom that life is devoted.

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But, "With Me thou shalt be in safeguard:"
One only Rock on which to build the house.
One only Cavern whither the dove may fly.
One only Ark that will outride the deluge.
False voices may speak of other safety:
"I can surely conquer this difficulty by one effort."
"My pride will never let me yield to that temptation."
"The very look of the thing is my safeguard from such an attack."
Miserable deceivers all!
One Voice says truly, "With Me, safeguard;" and that Voice says also, "Take up thy Cross daily, and follow Me."
The reason of this safety: "He that seeketh My Life, seeketh thy life." His enemy and yours, daily and hourly, seeks your life, daily and hourly seeks to rob you of your true, real, inward, Sister's life.
But every attack against you is really directed against the Captain of your Salvation.
Your life is in very deed, not *your* life:
it is *the* life He gives you, His dear Life.
His Intercession for us in Heaven, the one thing dreaded above all others by evil spirits.
"*My* Life"—won for you by My great Agony, held so cheap by them that buffeted Me,

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and set Me at nought, and yet so unspeakably dear to My FATHER; which I laid down because I willed, which I resumed again because I would; which has supplied, from then till now, the courage of My Martyrs, the long suffering and patience of My Confessors, the purity of My Virgins: which ye desire from Me; whereof it is written, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Next to the Blessed Sacrament, your own prayers form the dearest, closest union with Him.

Take the two clauses together.

1. "Fear not."

2. "Abide with Me."

See what that means in His Mouth, Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

"He abideth faithful."

What was your last unfaithful act towards Him?

Whatever it were, thus He speaks for the future:

"My own, so loved, so chosen, so elected, abide with Me.

"When I have so persevered in My love for thee, is it a great thing to be constant to Me?

"When I conquered Satan for thee (and at what a price!) is it so much to conquer thyself?"

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And then—"Fear not:" the words of the Great High Priest.

Any other priest must bid you fear, fear the malice of the devil, fear your own weakness, fear lest you may be tempted to turn back.

But His infinite love and power proclaim, "Fear not."

He loves you so infinitely, is so infinitely careful to guard you, has so infinitely paid down the price of your fearlessness,

therefore no real and true fear for you.

Danger enough;

but fear? No. "Perfect love casteth out fear."

And what love is perfect, if His is not?

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17.

1 KINGS xxii. 36.

"And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country."

A glorious host, moving on before us by its thousands, and its tens of thousands!

Not one that has not fought the good fight, that has not kept the faith, that is not, having conquered, to sit down even as the Leader conquered, and sat down:

Martyrs, of all ages, and by every conceivable and inconceivable torture:

Confessors, who in a thousand different ways, overthrew the world, the flesh, and the devil:

Virgins, at whose feet the spiritual Sisera bowed and fell:

Doctors, who by the sword of the SPIRIT desolated heresy:

These the most glorious: but behind and after them, many a brave soldier who, unknown except to a few comrades, fol-

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lowed the Captain of his salvation in a life-long struggle:

many a life-long sufferer who triumphed on the bed of sickness:

many a young recruit, laurelled, almost at the first, with the eternal wreath.

Then, in their different battalions, the vowed Religious, under their several Rules militant: each with its own banner and vestment.

"The people pass on by their thousands and their tens of thousands."

And this war with Satan: how long is it to last?

"Man goeth to his work and to his labour *until* the evening."

As individual man, so the collective Church.

"About the going down of the sun."

The sun is fast sinking in the west,

The shadows are lengthening,

The twelve hours of the day wherein man can work, are drawing to their end.

And what the proclamation?

"The LORD Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of GOD."

And thank GOD, we know also what that "own Country," is!

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So far, the text taken in a restricted and lower sense, of the elect alone.

But what if we see in it the whole body of the Church Militant,

unholy as well as holy,

tares as well as wheat?

All profess to be fighting.

All are members of the Church Militant: truly, really, absolutely.

"There went a proclamation"—

Yes: up to then they have been professing, sheep and goats, to belong to the same field:

they have been growing, wheat and tares, in the same field:

Now each must depart to his own country.

For Judas Iscariot had an own place:

as much as each of the Eleven had one of the many mansions.

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18.

ISAIAH xlix. 20.

"The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell."

In the Church:
in Religious Orders:
in the inward Christian life:
there must sometimes be this cry, "The place is too strait for me."

Else there are the seeds of decay, and, it may be, very rapid decay.

The Church in North Africa, had, in S. Augustine's day (A.D. 420,) 480 bishops, and all the fervour a Church could wish, save this point: it had no missionary spirit.

It kept the light of truth to itself; and that GOD will not endure.

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

A hundred and fifty years later, it had but four bishoprics.

So in your own lives: if the amount of effort which satisfied you two years ago, satisfies you still:

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if a venial sin, indulged in then, is equally indulged in now:

if the same amount of devotion contents you:

if you have never, in this sense, said, "The place is too strait for me:"

think of the miserable fall of the African Church.

"Spare not," what? any offering: prayer, self-denial, labour; the cords of love *must*, somehow, be lengthened:

Count nothing done while anything remains to do:

Beware of the mortal sin of listlessness.

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19.

ISAIAH lvii. 14.

"And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of My people."

[ASCENSION.]

The victory was won forty days since.

The triumph is now approaching.

"Leaving us an example that we should follow His steps."

If in the reviling, why not in the glory?

If in the weakness, why not in the majesty?

Only because of our lack of faith.

He is our example in the Ascension no less than in the Passion:

in the great Forty Days of glory no less than in the great Forty Days of temptation.

"Cast ye up."

He, Himself the Way, cast up the glorious way from earth to heaven.

He bids you do what He did.

You have promised to follow the Pattern of suffering:

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You ought equally to strive after the happy end.

"Prepare ye the way."

By leading others to it: first by example,
then by word.

"Take up the stumblingblock out of the way of My people."

A terrible question for a Sister to ask herself:
"Have I put stumblingblocks in others' way?"

You—bound to so much,
knowing the readiness to take offence of those who despise the higher life,
so to behave as to disgust others with the idea of the Religious Life!
or, by your laxity, to encourage others to be yet more lax;

(and the indirect and unknown influence for good or evil may be great and wide beyond your utmost conceptions.)

"Why *stand* ye gazing up?"

The way is not merely to be looked at,
not merely to be longed for;
but trodden;

And not only to be trodden, but to be *cast up*.

As He, for you,
So you (His grace helping you) after Him.

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20.

ZECH. ix. 8.

"And I will encamp about Mine House because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with Mine eyes."

Two armies: of good and of evil angels.

"If GOD be for us, who can be against us?"

"My *House*." "The Temple of GOD is holy, which temple ye are."

Take it of the heart of each individual, or of this House altogether.

"My House:" where I dwell, and will be worshipped.

"I will encamp about My House." "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid?"

"Him that passeth by:" the tempter, watching and waiting, to pounce on us: or leaving us untempted, to throw us off our guard.

"Him that returneth." He always will return, in this world. He departed from our LORD "for a season." The servant is not above his LORD.

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"No oppressor shall *pass through;*" not, shall *attack.* He may assault, but he shall not rule.

"For *now* have I seen with Mine eyes." When? Ever, by His Godhead; but, by His Manhood, not till "He Himself suffered, being tempted.

Because "Jesus wept," therefore, so emphatically, "Now have I seen with Mine eyes."

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21.

S. LUKE i. 19.

"And the Angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of GOD; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings."

Marvellously grand, such answer to such question.

"Whereby shall I know this?"

"I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of GOD."

A sign Zacharias asked, and a sign he shall have; but first of all, that sentence: without any re-affirmation of the previous announcement.

Yet see how this Angel answered the two questions of Zacharias and of S. Mary.

They seem alike: yet nothing more different.

Zacharias: "Whereby shall *I* know this?"

S. Mary: "How shall this be?" that is, by what means? In other words, "LORD, what wilt thou have me to do?"

But as with Zacharias, so with you,

Your Guardian Angel is present; though unseen.

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And, though of different degrees, yet all stand in the Presence of GOD.

Some temptation arises: it may be often downright work of Satan's angels.

Help is ready, in the hands of the Guardian Angel.

You feel the difficulty: "How can I do this or that?"

Hear him answering: "I am thine Angel, which stand in the Presence of GOD:" and what strength and confidence does not that answer inspire?

You feel the weight of temptation: "How can I bear this or that?"

> "How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
> To come to succour us that lie in want!"

* * * * *

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22.

S. LUKE i. 34.

"Then said Mary unto the Angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

As Virgin, and Queen, and glory of Virgins, S. Mary's words are especially adapted to Sisters.

"How shall this be?"

That was the critical moment in the history of the world.

Had Mary's faith wavered but for one instant, the economy of grace would have been frustrated, the Incarnation would not have taken place.

So, critical times in each soul on which its future history depends.

The question arises then, "How shall this be?"

Let it be asked in the spirit of S. Mary, not of Zacharias; for guidance, not in doubt.

"How shall this be?"

What is your greatest present difficulty?

Work to be done?

Temptation to be resisted?

Guard to be kept over thoughts, words, or acts?

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First, of temptation.

Few things more remarkable in the lives of the Saints, than their wonderful pains to conquer every besetting sin, however small.

In the case of any temptation it must not be the question, *shall* this be?
but, *how* shall this be?

"How have I tried against it heretofore?"

Some attempts end in failure,
some result in transient success,
some leave the case worse than it was at first.

Discriminate then; and then look round for external means of being helped.

A great point of spiritual wisdom to discover this;

A great point of spiritual courage to act it out when it involves asking help from another person.

Next, of work.

"How shall this be?"

Of any difficult task, not to say, "This is so difficult, how shall I ever manage it?
so fearful, how shall I ever endure it?"

The Three Children give a glorious example as to that sort of *how*. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter."

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"How shall this be?" means:

"How heartily can I do it?

How can I make the most of it?

How can I make it go furthest to GOD's glory?

How can I set about it, so as to bring down the most abundant dew of His blessing?"

Following the Blessed Virgin in her question, the Angel's answer, also, may be looked for in its measure.

"The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the SON of GOD."

That power of the Most Highest which so stupendously overshadowed her, must, in its degree, overshadow each of you in every difficulty.

Sheltering from the blast of the terrible ones, defending under His wings, guarding from the fierce heat of temptation.

By means of her being so overshadowed, the SON of GOD was born into the world.

By means of that Power, acting on you, His likeness must be renewed in each of you; your actions and words must set forth Him, the Infant in Bethlehem, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

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"How shall this be?

It applies to other marvels of our LORD's Life.

"How," that He, the spotless Lamb, should atone for our sins?

That the Face, the Joy of Angels, should be marred with filthy spittings?

That the Hands which created all things should be nailed to the Cross?

That the Body hereafter to appear in ineffable glory, to judge both quick and dead, should sleep the sleep of death in the new Tomb?

But the Church has always seen a greater marvel in the Incarnation, than in the Passion.

Outside the Church, men seem unable to realize the oneness of the Everlasting Word with the Babe of Bethlehem.

"How shall this (the Incarnation) be?"

It shall be *so* that these bodies, of which He deigned to take one, shall be counted worthy to be temples of the HOLY GHOST, to receive and to be united to His own Body and Blood, to be one day victorious over death, and capable of the Beatific Vision.

So that all matter is hallowed:

that, in a far different sense from ever before,

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"The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof."

Hence is all Christian art in this world.

hence arise the Apocalyptic glories of the world to come.

hence your high vocation, your holy and reasonable service, your self-dedication to the Bridegroom of Virgins, of which He daily make you more worthy!

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23.

S. Luke ii. 43-45.

"And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him."

"He tarried behind." It might be so now:
you may go out to especial service, to ordinary duty, and He may tarry behind.

Instead of, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,"
it may be, "I can do nothing, for I have not His strength."

"And Joseph and His Mother knew not of it."
Sad to be parted from Him at all:
far more sad to be parted, *and not to know it.*

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Like Samson, Judges xvi. 20.
the children of Israel, 1 Sam. iv. 10.

(On the other hand, He may seem to be absent, and yet be most truly present: and so He is wont to deal with His elect.)

And how, when they were aware of it?
Did they try to discover Him?
"They went a day's journey."
While it *is* day, a soul may be content without Him:
but how, when the night cometh?
How, when it must be He, or must be nothing?
"They sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances." Cant. iii. 2.
He must be sought in secret, and alone. Gen. xxxii. 24.
"And when they found Him not, they"—
How many different ends there may be to that sentence!
—gave up seeking—thought it useless—let things take their own way—sought dependently, half-heartedly,—

OR

"They turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him."
The only one thing to do:

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to turn from all things else, to Jerusalem, the vision of peace:

and to turn to Jerusalem, *seeking Him.*

And even so, it does not follow that you should find Him at first.

O marvellous lesson of the patience with which, when lost, He is to be sought!

He was lost one day:

He was sought three.

Are you to think it much, after yielding to any negligence or temptation, if you have to seek Him for a longer time than you lost Him?

to have lost Him indeed easily,

but to need all pains and energy again to find Him?

"And they found Him in the temple."

And may that be verified in us, here and hereafter!

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24.

Acts xv. 39.

"And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other."

God is sometimes pleased to allow the sins and infirmities of His Saints to mar, to a certain extent, His own work.

The battle-field of the Church was now in Asia Minor, on account of the natural opposition of the heathen, and of the Judaizing heresy.

S. Paul came alone; one, only, of two mentioned in the apostolic letter, as its bearers; and he, too, less well-known to that part of the Church than S. Barnabas.

We find that the churches which S. Paul visited now, especially that of Galatia, were precisely those which Judaized most afterwards: probably for want, at least in some degree, of S. Barnabas' presence at the delivery of the letter.

"It must needs be that offences come."

So, through the whole history of the Church, it

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must needs be that misunderstandings arise between the truest servants of God.

But see how S. Paul makes up by his affection to S. Barnabas afterwards.

The point of the matter:

"Be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as GOD for CHRIST'S sake hath forgiven you."

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25.

PHIL. iv. 2, 3.

"I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the LORD. And I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."

Three Deaconesses mentioned in the New Testament.

These two, and Phœbe of Cenchræa.

Two or three lessons in the text.

See how, in the very early times of the Church, the enemy sowed tares among the wheat.

When the new believers were pouring all that they possessed into the treasury of the Church, he turned their good work, on the one hand, into an occasion of quarrelling (Acts vi.): and on the other, into the occasion of a lie of sacrilege. (Acts v.)

The noble Apostolic journey, which converted half Asia Minor, was marred in its outset by a quarrel. (Acts xv.)

And now here. If perfect love and peace are to

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be anywhere expected, surely among Sisters of Apostolic times.

Yet their disputes must have been a sore scandal, before the report of them reached Rome.

See how lovingly he treats it: not entering into details, not determining the right and the wrong;

but only beseeching them, by their One Bridegroom, to be of the same mind in Him.

"Woe unto the world because of offences. For *it must needs be* that offences come: but woe unto him by whom the offence cometh."

We know Who said those words.

Very remarkable, that, "It must needs be."

But if it takes two persons to make a quarrel, it takes two to make an offence.

Duty of patience, and consideration, and making allowance.

In the New Testament, exclusive of the Apostles, three persons only are named of whose salvation we are certain. Those three are all named here.

For the two verses are not to be separated as to their meaning: and the word *those*, in the second, would be better rendered, *these*.

S. Paul would say, "Help these women, which laboured with me: they are really in

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earnest; they are both fighting in GOD'S battle; they are both earning GOD'S reward: they have helped me; now do you help them, set them right, make them understand each other;" and then comes the wonderful part—"With Clement also . . . whose names are in the Book of Life."

Human nature then the same as now.

The greatest of Old Testament prophets is called "a man subject to like passions with ourselves."

So these Sisters, subject to like passions;

but how infinitely precious in GOD'S sight!

The lesson: faith for others, and patience with them, and with ourselves.

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